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Things to think on

Robert Milton Latimer

KD

8526





*Sincerely Yours,
Robt. M. Latimer.*

Things To Think On



BY

REV. ROBERT MILTON LATIMER, D. D.



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FOREWORD

For some years broken health has compelled the author to forego the great privilege of preaching the gospel.

During all these years an intense desire to fulfill his ministry in some humble capacity has ever possessed him.

Though painfully conscious of the imperfection of this offering, the author makes it, since he alone can perform his own task.

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Things to Think On.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

The Foundation of the whole superstructure of Christianity is the elect, precious Stone laid in Zion. Much of weakness, and even sin, as wood, hay and stubble, may be built on that Foundation, along with the gold and silver and precious stones.

However unworthy our deeds may be, if we but really build our spiritual house upon the Rock, the winds and the floods cannot wreck it.

Since the foundation is so vitally important, how may we know what is the true Foundation? Jesus Christ rang out the same note of the certainty of His claims to be the Messiah by His resurrection from the dead, that Isaiah and all the other prophets voiced: The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.

Paul staked the truth of Christianity on Christ's resurrection. To him, we are without God and without hope in the world, if Christ be not risen, and we are of all men most miserable.

Since so much depends on a risen and living Lord, can we know that Jesus really burst the bonds of death, and came forth from Joseph's new tomb on that morning of the first day of the week, nineteen hundred years ago?

In the discussion of this great question of such vital import, one is embarrassed by the abundance of equally important proofs of Jesus' resurrection, and hardly knows what to select and what to pass over.

For the sake of argument, let us forget that there is a Book, whose statements and declarations on all subjects have never been successfully controverted by all the genius and ingenuity of its most powerful enemies, and whose prophecies concerning this man Christ Jesus were fulfilled to the minutest statements. Let us forget for the moment, that in this well-authenticated volume it was foretold that He was to be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb, dumb before His shearers, opening not His mouth, He was to be slain for the redemption of His people. Let us pass over the fact that the volumes containing this record were in the possession of the Jews hundreds of years before Jesus Christ came on His mission of love and suffered and died on Calvary.

Let us for a moment, see whether there is any reason for believing in the resurrection of Christ Jesus as a mere historical fact.

We believe any one will concede that the fact that a complete change in some fixed observance, hoary with age, and imbedded in the life and affections of a people, took place at some time in the past, necessarily compels the reasonable mind to conclude that there was some cause for the change. Up to the reported resurrection of Jesus there was no doubt in the mind of any Jew that the last day of the week was the sacred day. On that day the whole Jewish world halted in all its secular life, and rigidly enforced the keeping of this day by the most rigorous sanctions.

A wonderful change took place among thousands of Jews, the converts of the Nazarene. They accepted as their sacred day, without a word of protest, so far as the record goes, the first day of the week. We have abundant proof that even the converted Jews were, for a very considerable time, exceedingly zealous in maintaining the observance of many things in the ceremonial law.

Even Peter and Paul, very pillars in the new dispensation, were loth to give up many of the customs, so sacred to the Jew under the old order of things.

But, marvelous to say, all the disciples of Jesus henceforth are found gathered together in their upper rooms and wherever they could assemble for worship, on the first day of the week. A wonderful event must have marked out this as a day to take the place of the ancient Sabbath around which clustered all that was sacred in the life of the ancient people of God.

Dismayed, well nigh utterly despairing, after the crucifixion of their Lord, now behold these converted Jews celebrating Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week.

We find a remarkable change in the chronology of that part of the world that has counted most for civilization, so that events are now chronicled as B. C., or A. D.

We find the teachings of Jesus meeting acceptance everywhere. Since His death on Calvary and ascension to Heaven, the Christ spirit has founded hospitals, and men have learned that real kingship is found in service to fellow man.

All the great leaders of men before Christ founded kingdoms by force, and their power did not live after them.

This is true of Hannibal, of Alexander, of Caesar, of Napoleon. Jesus founded a Kingdom on love.

He unsheathed no sword, He dragged no captives at His chariot wheels, but founding a Kingdom on love, we can say of Him, after more than nineteen hundred years have passed away, what we can say of no other great world leader, "Whom having not seen, we love." We may admire a Washington, a Howard, or a Gordon, but we cannot love him. But here is a Person whom millions, who never saw Him, love and adore.

The explanation is evident. He is not dead, but alive. As He walks with us on many a sad, lonely journey to Emmaus, our hearts burn within us, as He, in a mysterious, but all-powerful way, reveals Himself to us as the one Balm for all our sorrows, as the one Physician for all our diseases.

Through all the ages, men of all nationalities, of all temperaments, of all degrees of culture, have found a peace that the world cannot give nor take away, in this Jesus of Nazareth, the living and all-powerful Saviour of men.

That Jesus—the historical Jesus—is a potential force, a mighty power, as evidenced by His ever-continuing influence in the world, is granted everywhere where His Gospel has gone, and as the years pass away, this wonderful Person is more and more dominating the hearts and minds of men.

"I know men," said the great Napoleon as he was nearing the end of his marvelous career, "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus is not a man. Everything in Him amazes me. His spirit outreaches mine, and His will confounds me. Comparison is impossible between Him

and any other being in the world. He is truly a Being by Himself. His ideas and His sentiments; the truth that He announces; His manner of convincing—are all beyond humanity and the natural order of things. His birth and the story of His life; the profoundness of His doctrines, which overturn all difficulties, and are their own most complete solution; His gospel; the singularity of His mysterious Being; His appearance; His empire; His progress through all countries and kingdoms—all this is to me a prodigy, an unfathomable mystery. I see nothing here of man. Near as I may approach, closely as I may examine, all remains above my comprehension—great with a greatness that crushes me. It is in vain that I reflect—all remains unaccountable!”

When we turn to the account of Jesus’ resurrection as given us by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we cannot but feel that here we have the records of trustworthy eyewitnesses, who were convinced in spite of themselves.

The most casual reader of the story of Jesus’ life on earth, as it came daily in contact with the chosen little circle of apostles, is struck with their obtuseness in respect to all He plainly taught them concerning His death and resurrection. How sad was the confession of utter dejection and despair wailed out into the ears of Jesus as He walked toward Emmaus with the two disciples! They hoped that Jesus would have redeemed Israel, as a great conqueror, striking off the Roman yoke, and making His little band of disciples rulers in the great kingdom that He would set up; but now, as they walked and were sad, all their hopes were dust. He was stark and cold in Joseph’s new tomb!

When the women came with the story of the empty

tomb and even with the assertion that they had been informed by the angels that He had risen, their words seemed as idle tales to the disheartened and affrighted disciples. And yet, with all their doubts, they were finally so thoroughly convinced that Jesus rose from the dead, that, henceforth, they proclaimed a risen and ascended Saviour in the face of the fiercest persecutions. Saul the erstwhile persecutor, became Paul, the chosen vessel of the Lord, to bear His name to the Gentiles. He who before his vision on the way to Damascus, spared no pains in hailing men and women, and dragging them to cruel persecution, now amidst snares on every side, and ever-present peril of life, went everywhere proclaiming a risen Lord. He counted it all joy to turn his back on a life of wealth and culture, a position of authority among his own countrymen, and he preached the resurrection power of Jesus, from youth to age, and, at last, laid down his life in testimony to the truth of this Gospel of the Son of God.

If the story of Jesus' resurrection had been a mere fabrication we would have expected more of the dramatic in its account. Surely Jesus would have appeared to Pilate and the Scribes and Pharisees who were instrumental in procuring His death; but we find that He appeared only to His own disciples; to the women; to the apostles and to the five hundred or more brethren at one time.

Notice the orderliness of His exit from the tomb. How calm the Lord, who, though nature trembled in a mighty convulsion as He came forth to life, delayed for a moment to neatly fold away the linen clothes, the cerements of death that He had left forever!

How credulous must he be who can believe the story that the poor, weak and affrighted disciples stole the body

of Jesus from the tomb, guarded as it was by stern Roman soldiers, and sealed with the seal of Rome. What a mighty effort it would have required to break that seal! How soundly must those men of Rome have slumbered through all that din and commotion! And these poor scared disciples dared and did all this to bolster up a lie, to make men believe Jesus rose from the dead, when they did not believe He did rise, and would not believe it until the evidence of it was no longer to be denied. Surely Joseph's new tomb and that princely apparel in which their Master's body was arrayed were better for Him now than any place to which His friends could bear Him! Their hopes were dust, and the dead man in that tomb could set up no Kingdom, and give them no places of authority on His right and on His left in that Kingdom.

Even if we admit, for the sake of argument, that it would have been possible to rifle that tomb, where was Jesus' body taken? If the Scribes and Pharisees believed the story they industriously circulated, would they not forever have taken away all possibility of its denial, by producing the missing body? But there is not the slightest hint that even any effort was ever made to find the body of Jesus.

On the other hand, hundreds who had seen Him and associated with Him before His death, staked everything—property, position, even life itself, that they might proclaim that He was a risen and ascended Saviour. Men will not risk everything for a lie. These men believed Jesus had risen and they believed it only after the most positive proof had been given them.

Consider for a moment "the power of His resurrection." Not only Nature quaked as He came forth from the tomb,

Lord over death, but down through all the ages, "the power of His resurrection" has been attested by countless human beings turned from death unto life through faith in Him.

From the proud, uncompromising Saul of Tarsus, on down the ages, the same "power" that brought again our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave, has rolled back the stone that has held men and women captives to sin and Satan, dead in trespasses and in sins! Augustine, Bunyan, Newton, Jerry McAulay, the poor river thief—in countless throng they proclaim His power to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God through Him.

From cover to cover the Bible proclaims this all-powerful Saviour. All His life, from the manger to the cross and the grave, climaxes in the resurrection, in a risen and ascended Saviour who tasted death for every one who will come unto Him.

Look up, faint heart! To him who trusts in Jesus, there is no sting in death, no victory in the grave!

Surely Victor Hugo voices the triumph of the Christian: "The tomb is not a blind alley. It is a thoroughfare. It closes in the twilight, to open in the dawn."

THE UNFAILING DEMONSTRATION

Volume after volume on the evidences of Christianity has been written in the effort to substantiate the claims of the Christian religion; learning has been invoked to do her best to prove that man is not as the beasts that perish. But conceding the value of all these contributions to the elucidation of the greatest of all questions, "If a man die, shall he live again?" the mind is not satisfied, even after it has considered them all, and must acknowledge that the demonstration is not complete.

While this method of proving the truth of Christianity is helpful, it does not satisfy the longing of the heart for something that sustains in all the vicissitudes of life.

In the eighteenth verse of the first chapter of Isaiah, I think we have the one unfailing demonstration of the truth of that system of truth that was promulgated by our Lord, "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Here is the very heart of the Gospel: The terrible and hopeless state of sin, and the all-sufficient remedy; the wreck and ruin of Eden and the atonement of Calvary.

The one differentiation of Christianity from all other religions is its power, when it thoroughly takes hold of a life, to radically regenerate that life. There is much of beauty and even of power in the Shastas and Vedas and in Confucianism, but there is no satisfaction there for sin; there is no washing away of the crimson stains of guilt; there is no profound peace that flows as a river. Only one

Voice in all the ages has ever been able to exorcise the devils that hold high carnival in the human heart.

Other religions have drawn men by their lofty, ethical teachings, or by the lure of unbridled lust here and beyond the grave. But the religion of Jesus rebukes in the sternest terms all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; it tears away every mask of hypocrisy and holds up to its disciples, as the final test of its transforming power, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" and "if there be any virtue, if there be any praise," they are to "think on these things." What religion but the religion of Jesus can predicate its claims on mankind upon its high moral quality: "Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man."

What other man but the man Christ Jesus could stand out in the white light of the investigation and scrutiny of all the ages, and cry out the challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

The testimony of all the centuries of Christ's true disciples is one: "They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "The Lamb as it was slain" was the center of all that wonderful panorama that passed before the eyes of John on lonely Patmos.

"The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," is the all-sufficient explanation of the power that came into the lives of men and women in all the ages and enabled them to triumph gloriously over all the machinations of Satan and all his cohorts.

There is no other explanation, than that of the blood,

of the wonderful transformation of the desperately wicked boy, John Bunyan, into the immortal dreamer whose spiritual vision pierced beyond the veil 'twixt time and eternity. Newton, the vile blasphemer, became Newton, the saint, by the power of the blood.

What means the wonderful change of Jerry McAulay the notorious river thief, into a man who was used of God to bring many sons and daughters into the Kingdom? The power of the blood! The blood that flowed from the five wounds of that Sufferer on the central cross of Calvary, is the explanation of all the triumphs of God's people in all the ages, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. To all the challenges of unbelief, this is a sufficient answer: vile men and women in all centuries have been made pure and white in Jesus' blood.

Zacchaeus felt this power when he turned away from his ill-gotten gains, and offered to restore fourfold; Paul felt it when the scales dropped from his eyes, and instead of Saul the persecutor, he became Paul the persecuted, but proudly triumphant, herald of the cross, who lived and died for God and fellowman. "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Our religion demonstrates its power to save by the radical transformation it works in human lives.

THE "LITTLE BIBLE."

Martin Luther called the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, the "Little Bible." It does, indeed, admirably summarize the whole truth necessary for salvation: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Here we have a declaration that could never have been uttered by Christ's contemporaries, or by the men that lived before Him. The Jew had no such world sweep of vision. His own little land and his own people were alone the objects in his thought worthy of God's love in its highest and best sense.

That the Christ of prophecy was to come into the world to save the Gentile, as well as the Jew, and that God was no respecter of persons, or nations, he could not understand. Hence, when Jesus preached a world-wide salvation, the Jews were offended. They could not **accept** Him as Lord when He ate with Gentiles and sinners.

We have in this verse a comprehensive view of the Trinity at work: God loving and pitying the world so as to send the Son of His love to redeem it; the Son coming from the brightness of the glory that was His as the only begotten Son of His Father, to lay down His life a ransom for a lost and ruined race; the Holy Ghost brooding over the hearts of men and drawing them to Him in whom alone is eternal life.

• Jesus seems aware when He utters these words that human language is utterly inadequate to express in all its fullness the thought He would give Nicodemus, and, through him,

would pass on down to the remotest ages. So He says: "God so loved the world." Amazing thought! God loved us so as to give His Son who made the worlds, suns and systems, sown over the inconceivably vast spaces of the universe, to come down into the world to die for us on the accursed cross!

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The atonement is the central doctrine of God's Word. From Genesis to Revelation all is an inexplicable mystery if we cast aside the atoning death of Christ Jesus.

Man needed a Saviour. He was under the curse of a broken law that cried out in no uncertain tones, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Christ's mission was "not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Hence, we find Him oft at the houses of publicans and sinners. Had Jesus courted the favor of the Scribes and Pharisees, and instead of denouncing them, had approved of their manner of life, He would have enjoyed unlimited popularity among these rulers of the people. Jesus knew this, but He came to save the world, and walked up and down Palestine for thirty-three years with Calvary full in view. O, what wonderful, what incomprehensible, love!

In looking around us we find many evidences in material nature of the love of God for mankind. In the air we breathe, the sun that warms our bodies and brings life and beauty to the world; in the refreshing rains of heaven; in the abundant harvests—in all these blessings and ten thousand more, we read that love that planned a world for man's comfort and happiness.

But, on the other hand, we feel the solid earth quake beneath us, we start back in awe from the death-dealing cyclone, and cannot understand how these agencies of destruction can come from the same hand that causes the sun to shine and the refreshing rains to descend from the heavens. But the reverent child of God learns that these are means, not ends, and that his Father is working out through them his good, although he may not be able now, to understand it all.

God does not intend in these things of an earthly nature to measure His love to us. The one evidence of that is the gift of His only begotten Son. This is the only adequate expression of His love to a lost and ruined world.

In giving the Son of His love to die for us, God exhausted His power. He could do no more. The Trinity held a council, and to the question, "Who will go for us?" on the mission to save a fallen race, the Son answered, "Here am I, send Me." Then God sent His Son, the express image of His person, and very God, to make a Divine Atonement for a broken law. Vain, vain, any other atonement! Gabriel, who shines and burns before the ineffable glory, could not fulfill this mission—God must die, that we might live!

Christ has come, suffered and died. He has lain in the grave, but could not be holden of death. He has burst the bonds of death and has ascended to His Father's Throne. A complete salvation is provided, but in order that it may become effective, it must be appropriated. Faith is the instrument that must lay hold of this gift of God's love. The power was in Jesus, but the poor afflicted woman only felt this saving power when she touched the hem of His garment.

Our Lord tells Nicodemus that as the uplifted serpent in the wilderness was the only remedy for the bite of the fiery serpents, so the uplifted Christ on Calvary's Cross is the only salvation of the dying sinner, bitten by the fiery serpents of sin.

In the account of the brazen serpent the Israelites were told to look upon it for life. Our Lord says that we are to believe in Him as He is lifted up in order that we may have eternal life. Faith, then, is an earnest, longing look away from all earthly means of rescue—a looking to the crucified Saviour alone for salvation.

If the serpent-bitten Israelites had insisted on turning to their own physicians and methods of cure, they would surely have died. So must he miserably perish who trusts in his morality or who relies on the uncovenanted mercies of God.

In the twelfth verse of the first chapter of the gospel of John, we have these words: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power (the right, the privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Here faith is as the arms opened to receive the Saviour. As we open wide our arms to receive and embrace our dearest loved ones, so we receive Christ by faith. Faith is also represented in God's Word as coming to Jesus. The Saviour says, "Come unto Me;" "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." When the poor prodigal "came to himself," he arose and came to his father. To have faith in Jesus is to leave the husks that the swine do eat and arise and go to the Saviour.

Faith in Christ delivers us from death, but it does not stop there; we shall not only not perish, but shall have ever-

lasting life. Jesus repeats this assurance from the preceding verse and thus gives it the emphasis of repetition.

Who can measure the content of this glorious promise? Not only freedom from annihilation, but an existence with God and the redeemed in heaven throughout the countless ages of eternity. There we shall walk and talk with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; there we shall thrill as David, the sweet singer, touches his now glorified harp and sings a sweeter song than any that charmed away the demons that beset Saul; there our converse shall be with Paul and all the great characters of all the ages. But, better than all, we shall be face to face with Jesus, and shall catch that glory that so irradiated Moses' countenance when he came down from the mount that he had to veil his face that the people might be able to look upon him; and, better than all, we shall be like Jesus, for we shall see Him as He is.

THE UNANSWERABLE CHALLENGE OF JESUS

"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Our Lord threw out this clear, unmistakable, challenge to His enemies. They were ever watching His every footstep; they were noting His every word, watching with the intense earnestness of deadly enemies to entrap Him in some word, or action, that would lead to His destruction.

To such men Jesus makes this challenge. No other man ever lived who dared thus invite the minutest scrutiny into his life.

Though watched day and night, though hounded everywhere He went, no man ever convinced Jesus of sin, or ever made an accusation of wrong against Him that he could prove. The fiercest light of all the ages has been pouring down upon this wonderful Man of Galilee, libraries have been written concerning Him, and yet, instead of finding any blemish in Him, even His enemies have declared that they could find no fault in Him. He stands alone as the Sinless One.

Jesus did not ascend some lofty tower far above the reach of the wicked men below, to escape the contamination of their sins; He did not retire into the desert, nor hide away in the caves of the hills, thus escaping the corruption that was in the world that He might be holy.

But His was the social life in its best sense. He was in the world, touching its men and women on every side, and yet he was not of the world. If he ate at the house of Publican or Pharisee, it was not because He loved sin,

or hypocrisy, but because He was consumed with the intensest desire to do men good, to lift up the lost and the fallen.

We are repeatedly told of the strict watch his enemies kept upon Him on all these occasions. And yet no macula could they discern upon His pure life. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet He was without sin.

To all who would deny His claim to be the Saviour from sin, His challenge rings out clear and unmistakable, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" If He is not the Son of God who made a complete atonement for sin, then we can convince Him of sin. For He claimed, in unequivocal terms, to be equal with God, and to be God; and growing out of this claim, He declared that He was competent to satisfy Divine Justice, and would lay down His life as a ransom from sin. If the men of Christ's time could prove nothing against Him as He stood before Pilate's judgment bar, and Pilate himself declared Him to be guiltless of the charges brought against Him; if the critics of all the ages have declared that He stands out unique, as the only one who never sinned, or erred in any word, or action, surely His claim to be the Saviour of men must be true.

What a comfort to poor, sinful men that there is one Refuge from the Nemesis that relentlessly pursues them—one Perfect Man, at whom Justice cannot strike, who enfolding in His strong embrace all who flee to Him for refuge, can ward off all the storms of vengeance that else would sweep them to swift and inevitable ruin!

Washed in the spilt blood of this sinless One, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"COMPLETE IN HIM."

As man came forth from the Creator's hand there was no imperfection in him, but he was complete in his entire mental, moral and physical constitution. He was made in the image of God, and to the eye of his Maker he was "very good." But man fell from his exalted estate and God's curse is upon him; and, in spite of flashes of his original nature, he is a sad, marred failure, incomplete in all of his being.

As to man's body how incomplete he is! There is no perfect human physical organism. As to the human mind, it is limited in grasp. The greatest intellects must acknowledge that they are painfully impotent in many of their efforts.

Man is incomplete as to his social, political, and, indeed, all his relations. In the higher spiritual sphere how patent is this incompleteness!

But the great Apostle looking out upon this dreary prospect has a vision. He sees this marred and ruined being emerging into new beauty and power and completeness. He sees the angel with flaming sword step aside as one approaches the closed gate of Paradise with an all-powerful Name emblazoned in his forehead, robed in a garment of spotless white. Redeemed man has a perfect right to enter now. What he lost in Adam he has regained in Christ. He is complete in Him.

The Christian's union with Christ is both Federal and Vital. Man fell when his first federal head, Adam, by disobedience to God lost his relation of union with Him. The second Adam, by obeying the law in all points, and

satisfying its demands by baring His own head to its stroke, became the new federal head of all who accept His work wrought out for them on Calvary, and their title to life eternal thus becomes complete in Him. The relation of the Christian to Christ is, also, vital. He partakes of Christ's life, just as the branch partakes of the life of the vine. All the merit of Christ's obedience is his.

Having this completeness of a legal kind, we grow more and more into the perfection of our Saviour as we go from grace to grace. Though we are all incomplete in ourselves, "in Him" we are perfect and without flaw. Christ is of God "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

We have the assurance of all wisdom and guidance since we are complete in Christ. Ours is, indeed, a goodly heritage. What the patriarchs, the prophets and seers of old longed for, we have: Grace and truth in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Truth of which the old ceremonial law was the shadow. He is the Grace, or favor, that stands between us and the stern demands of personal perfection.

The title to earthly possessions is never secure. Many flaws, unseen, may invalidate it any day. Kings are never secure in their power. To all mankind the hour of death dissolves all rights and privileges of an earthly character. All things earthly are incomplete and uncertain, even while we are here in this world, and surely slip from our grasp when we die.

But he who has his inheritance in Christ; he who is complete in Him, has his anchor secure within the vail, where storms can never loose it. So sure as Christ is complete in His title, he who has fled for refuge to Him can enter into His glory by an unassailable right.

But the moralist, the man who trusts in the uncovenanted mercies of God, all whose plea is other than the complete work of Christ, stand bared to all the storms of God's wrath. In Christ God is reconciled; out of Christ our God is a consuming fire.

Jesus stands today with outstretched hands to welcome all who will come unto Him. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

LOOKING BACK.

Holy Writ is our authority for the statement that he who, having put his hand to the plow, looks back, is not worthy of the kingdom.

We ought to weigh well all considerations, pro and con, before we commit ourselves to any course in life, and then, having addressed ourselves to the task we have assumed, we ought, in God's strength to press on in its accomplishment.

Fickle, notionate, people never succeed. Like Reuben, Jacob's son, they may have many excellent traits of character, but, like him, too, they fail in life's battles, because of them, as of him, it can be said: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."

That was not a bad idea of the old Roman soldiers to burn their bridges behind them, and thus cut off all possibility of running away from the task before them.

When we determine that we will succeed, the battle is more than half won. In the higher spiritual sphere, like the great apostle, we must forget the things that are behind, and press, with all the intensity of a great purpose, to those things that lie out before us.

It is never right to look back to Egypt and long for the flesh pots, the garlic and the onions, when we are bound for the Promised Land. Like Paul, if it is our duty to go up to Jerusalem, bonds, and even death must not make us falter, although we must tear ourselves from the detaining arms of our friends in following the beckoning hand of our Master.

Had Columbus turned back when his frightened sailors

besought him, he would never have discovered this good land of ours.

There are always friends who would urge us to give up any enterprise that is beset with hardships. But we must remember, "No cross, no crown," and fixing our eye steadily on our great Leader, press courageously onward.

That was a noble seaman in the life saving service, who, when some of his fellows hesitated to go to the assistance of a vessel about to perish, with the declaration that they could never return across such storm-tossed waves, replied: "We do not have to come back." Ah! this is the true note of the Gospel. "We do not have to come back." We have to obey the beckoning hand of our fellows in distress, which is the beckoning hand of God, but we are not responsible for results to ourselves, or others, when we have obeyed the higher behest of Duty. One backward look—one longing desire for the voluptuous and wicked pleasures of Sodom, was the undoing of Lot's wife, and is a warning, for all time, to those who, having turned their backs on the sinful pleasures of this world, look back.

Paul pressed forward! He could never have gained the prize had he looked back.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." Where there is no beckoning hand to higher and better things, the highest incentive to present faithfulness is absent.

That man who has not hitched his wagon to a star, is doomed ever to grovel in the dirt and filth of earth-born purposes.

CASTING STONES.

We have a trite, yet true, maxim to the effect that those who live in glass houses should not cast stones. It is unfortunately true that people of the most vulnerable character are the harshest judges of their fellows. On the other hand, the people who live the nearest above reproach are the people who are always ready to find an excuse for an erring fellow man. Of course our Lord did not intend to estop all judicious, or judicial, judgment when he said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." But we are sure He meant to warn us against any hasty, or prejudiced, judging of our fellow-beings.

Those hoary old hypocrites who tried to involve Jesus in trouble, either with the civil government, or with the Jews, by inveigling Him into a compromising declaration in the case of the poor unfortunate woman they brought before Him, received His stern rebuke, and each one slunk off, self-condemned, upon His challenge to him without sin to cast the first stone at her.

If we could but look down into the innermost recesses of our hearts, we would be profoundly humbled as we realized how unworthy we are of whatever of reputation we enjoy among our fellow men. John Newton never saw a poor drunkard staggering along his downward way to hell, or any other poor reprobate, without exclaiming, "There goes John Newton, but for the grace of God."

Instead of casting stones at our poor weak brother, let us give him a helping hand out of the ditch into which he has fallen.

What a tremendous leverage it would be in raising our

fallen sisters if the womanhood of our country would but say to them, as Jesus said to the poor fallen woman thrust into His presence, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

The light, placed, each night, in the window of the old Scotch elder, at last brought back to his home and heart his erring daughter, Flora Macdonald, who, scorned, would probably never have turned back from her way to utter destruction.

Let us beware, let in casting stones at others, they prove boomerangs to our own undoing. For, with whatsoever judgment we judge others, we shall be judged, and the same measure we mete out to our fellows, shall be the measure meted to us again.

Even when we feel sure we have been injured by another, we should be slow to retaliate. Better, far better, leave all settlement of accounts to God, who has said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay."

The saintliest men and women bear witness that **their** own deceitful hearts require so much of their time in **keep-**ing them in the love of God, that they have no **time to** drag others before the bar of judgment.

CONSOLATION IN THE SHADOWED HOME.

Sooner, or later, every human life must pass into the shadow.

Who has not stood in the presence of some great sorrow? Who has not lived through some hour when earth and all earth's concerns dwindled into utter insignificance before an overmastering sorrow!

Into one life such a sorrow came. To the father of a dear little boy was brought the message of alarm: "Robert has lockjaw. Come home." Then quickly followed the awful announcement before an opportunity to go home offered: "Robert is dead."

Useless to attempt to describe the poignant sorrow that burned as a fire in that father's breast; vain to try to picture the uttermost depth of agony that was his on that mid-night return to the broken home, or the unutterable anguish of the meeting of husband and wife, of parents and children.

The only consolation that came to that stricken family, then, or that has come to them in all the weary years that have since passed away, is the consolation that comes from Him who said, and proved, that He is the Resurrection and the Life as He called Lazarus from the grave.

Surely David's was not a misplaced confidence that enabled him to leave his child with God, assured that although his little one could not come back to his arms, he surely could go to him.

These words of comfort written for these sorrowing

parents in their shadowed hour, by the Rev. James Isaac Vance, D.D., may carry a note of comfort and of hope to some other stricken ones:

"The grief that flows at a child's death comes from a wound that never quite heals. A mother standing one day beside the grave in which she had buried, six years before, her ten-year-old boy, said: 'Not a day has passed since I laid his body there, but I have missed him.'

"Yes, a child's grave, though a little grave, casts a big shadow, and yet, the grief that flows at a child's death, is all hope. 'It is well with the child.' As sure as there is a Heaven, the child has gone there. The spectre of doubt cannot get into this grief. Our little messenger has gone on before us. We who remain, must front change and uncertainty awhile longer, but the child we bury, is buried into all that is good.

"Let our sob of sorrow be half song of thanksgiving. Let us seek that unselfishness which hides a parent's grief under a child's endless and infinite gain."

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is Head over all things to His church, which is His Spiritual Body. His mission on earth was to His church. He died for sinners, but for sinners to be redeemed; and contemplated as necessary to make up His church on earth and in heaven. In the world-wide view of Jesus, the kingdoms of this world are to become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord of all.

All history is inexplicable except upon the hypothesis that Jesus Christ moves through its whole course as its animating spirit. Even the wrath of man at last praises the triumphant Christ. When He was lifted upon the cross He became the magnet that is drawing, and will draw, all men and all things unto Him. The supremacy of Jesus Christ means the working out, through the personality of the men and women of His church of His great plans for the salvation of the world. Christians are *workers together with God*. As the church is His body, the head must think out the great problems that confront her; the eyes must be watchful to detect her enemies and to find opportunities to serve her; the hands must find a work to do, and the feet must run on her missions of love.

More and more, the world over, men are acknowledging the supremacy of Jesus Christ. He is pre-eminently the Master. Believers and unbelievers must pay tribute to Him by marking time from His birth, as well as before it.

Jesus is supreme in all ministries of love and helpfulness.

The hospitals, the homes of refuge for the unfortunate and the outcast ; the constant growing spirit of Christ abroad in the world ; the church spires that point the way to heaven— all these and countless other blessings to mankind attest the supreme place of Jesus in all that uplifts and benefits humanity.

Other religions have ethical systems, but the religion of Jesus *alone* has a Saviour *from sin*.

Other religions have in them much truth, but Jesus alone is *the Truth*.

Other religions have sacrifices ; Jesus alone is a *perfect, a sinless*, sacrifice that has a merit that can be transferred to another. He alone could call men to perfect rest in Himself. He alone in all the ages has spoken to tired and despairing men of a Father's House and the many mansions of rest awaiting them there in a *prepared place*.

We feel sure, since He has spoken, that our longing for immortality cannot mock us at last, for if it were not so, He would have told us. In this day of so much uncertainty we long to hear a voice of certainty ; we long to have some one speak to us out of a full and certain knowledge. While the scribes and Pharisees quoted Moses and endless traditions, Jesus spake as one having authority. He stood forth, and claiming superiority over all other teachers, He cried, "I say unto you."

What in another man would have been reprehensible egotism, we acknowledge as rightful authority in Jesus. Until Jesus came, man was like

"An infant crying in the night,
And with no language but a cry."

Now that He has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, to those sitting in darkness, a great light has come; to those afar off from home, a welcome has been given, and the Father's house is open wide to receive them.

Jesus has spoken the last word to man—and that word is *Come*: "Whosoever will, let him *come*." He who made all things, and whose are all things, extends the invitation. "To whom shall we go? Thou *alone* hast the words of eternal life."

THE TRANSFORMED LIFE.

The distinctive feature of Christianity—that which differentiates it from all other religions and ethical systems is the radical transformation which it works in the lives of those who give themselves wholly over to its influences. Infidelity is blatant in denouncing the religion of Jesus, and in commending itself; but a challenge to compare the fruits of Christianity with those of infidelity is met with silence on the part of the opponent of the true religion. This challenge can be successfully flung into the face of any adherent of any of the numerous religions of the world.

Christianity concerns itself with the inner man. The scribes and Pharisees were like white sepulchres—beautiful without, but within full of all corruption; and that was the secret of their bitter animosity to Jesus. They troubled themselves about the circumstantialia of the ceremonial law, and rejected the weightier matters of God's commandments.

A new creature, or a new creation, is the demand of Christianity. The Master penetrates far beyond all outward appearances, on down into the heart, and asks the question, "Is thy heart right with God?" Conduct is important only as it indicates the state of the heart—the true man. Out of the heart proceed murders, adulteries and all the long, foul list of sins, before the overt acts of transgression flaunt them in the face of the world.

In order that the heart may be right there must be a radical change in it—in Scriptural language, a new heart must be created within us. That this may be accomplished, the sinner must come into new relations with God.

The Fall is a great fact. Man's whole nature has become corrupted by the loss of original righteousness, and the consequent corruption of his whole nature, so that from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet he is all "wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores," and there is no soundness in him.

This is a fearful picture, but the worst of it all is, it is a true discription of man's moral and religious nature; and the taint of sin has also affected his physical nature.

Vain has been the cry of the devotees of every religion but that of Jesus, for relief from this fearful estate. The Mohammedan is promised, not relief from his sins, but an extended field for their indulgence in a happy land of lust, where he can throw the reins to the steed of unholy passion.

The best that these false religions can offer is a cessation of all care as the soul sinks into the negative bliss of Nirvana.

Christianity is the only system of religion that promises a complete pardon and readjustment of man's relations to God's violated laws. The thunders of Sinai are hushed at the foot of the cross, and God is just in justifying man who has laid hold of the complete righteousness of Christ.

Not only is the sinner quit of all the claims of the broken law, but God's grace enables him to repent, and by his own free act turn away from sin with loathing. His eyes are opened so that he sees sin in its own repugnant nature, and thus seeing it, and realizing that it would stab to the heart his best Friend, he hates it with all the intensity of his new nature.

Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer, and in God's sight he becomes holy in his legal relation to Him.

Faith now reaches forth its hand and appropriates Christ's righteousness, and the believer is now practically, as before, legally, separated from his sins. Wonderful transformation to legal and practical holiness in God's sight! But here on earth we have many foes to fight. Here are fightings without and, often, so weak are we, fears within. But the crowning day is coming! Soon we shall be delivered not only from the guilt of sin, but from its very presence and power.

We cannot conceive of that happy estate when no longer weighed down by the cruel load of sin, and, then, completely emancipated sons of God, we "shall mount up as with wings as eagles; shall run, and not be weary; shall walk, and not faint." All of our imperfections shall then be gone forever, and through that eternal day we shall rejoice in a perfection that shall far exceed that of man as he came forth from the hand of God. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity is more and more becoming a world-wide religion. In some of the heathen lands it has gained recognition as *one* of the religions of the countries, which is a decided concession, considering the bigotry of the devotees of heathen faiths. In so-called Christian lands there are numerous individuals who consider it *the* thing to become members of some church, and, then, are rarely seen at the Sabbath day services, and never at the midweek services of prayer and praise.

These Christians are in evidence at church entertainments, or wherever the social feature is prominent in church functions; but they do not rejoice when it is said unto them, "Let us go up into the house of the Lord." These Christians are easily offended at an imaginary slight of the pastor, or some member of the church. Among the number of these minimum disciples may be found those who oppose foreign missions; who cry out against the call of the church for money to do her work; who class all their fellow-members who do not share their views as hypocrites, or as well-nigh bordering on to hypocrisy.

While many men and women, utterly devoid of the grace of God in their hearts, are in the church, we must acknowledge that there are among the derelict members of every church some people who are Christians, though they follow afar off. Away down in the depths of their hearts there is a little spark of the flame of their first love, which at times is fanned into a tiny flame. They have allowed the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, the

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pleasures and the follies of the circle in which they move to win them away from a strong, vigorous service for their Master. They are *minimum* Christians. To live at this poor dying rate is, indeed, to discard all the joy and happiness of the Christian life; it is to live on the husks of the swine when the Father's House and all its abundant provision awaits them. It is to cause the withdrawal of the witness of the Spirit whose function is to bear witness with regenerated souls that they are the children of God. While one in this backslidden state may be a Christian, it is fearfully dangerous to trust to such an evidence of a regenerated heart as is found in an occasional awakening to a little interest in the church and her work.

In striking contrast to the minimum Christian is the *maximum* Christian—the man or woman whose whole soul is afire with zeal for God's cause, who is eaten up by zeal for His cause.

We find in this class the man, or woman, who holds up the pastor's hands by support to the limit of ability, by attendance on all the ordinances of God's house, and by a liberal financial support of all the enterprises of the church.

We would be surprised were we to go into the home of a maximum Christian and find dust on the family Bible. We would not expect to find the claims of business so urgent as to crowd out the morning prayer around the family hearthstone. Men of the world know who are maximum Christians. The lawyer, the physician, the merchant, are not found in their offices, or about their daily avocations while the midweek service is being held, or while any work they can help along is in progress. The church has made all the progress that is hers today because she has here and

there among her membership maximum Christians—men and women who consider that the best they have belongs to the Lord, and who would blush to bring to Him the halt, the blind, and the maimed—the poorest of their gifts, or service.

The church of God has made all her progress in spite of the poor, puny efforts of the minimum Christian—the man or woman, who lives the narrow, selfish life—that grudges God that devotion and service that are rightfully His.

Some day the redeemed church will shine forth “fair as the morn, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners,” and this glory He has chosen to reflect upon the world through maximum Christians, who shall wear star-decked crowns in His Kingdom. They are the men and women who shall be accounted worthy of an abundant entrance through the gates into the city.

Reader, are you a *minimum*, or a *maximum*, Christian? Answer this question to yourself *now*, that you may answer it without fear and shame at the Judgment Bar of God.

THE OLDEST COMMANDMENT

After God had labored six days, He rested the seventh day. That He intended this day of rest, after six days of toil, to be a *permanent* institution among men, for all time, we feel sure, for we are told He "blessed" and "sanctified" it.

Following the account of the creation, we have these words: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them; and on the seventh day, God ended His work which He had made; . . . and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

We cannot doubt, from these words, that the Sabbath day is of divine appointment. At the very beginning of time, after the work of creation was finished, God rested on the seventh day, and "blessed" and "sanctified" it. Thus we see that this day is not of human origin. It was not set apart for the Jews as a temporary expediency. Long before the Decalogue was promulgated amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, one day in seven was set apart for man—universal man—as a day of sacred rest. After labor comes, as an essential demand of man's nature, rest. In resting after the work of creation, God set the example for man, proclaimed the law of his nature—rest after labor. This law is embedded in his very being: the necessity of resting one-seventh of his time. Whenever man has attempted to violate it, ruin has overtaken him.

The French nation tried one day in ten as a rest day for man and beast, but found, to its sorrow, that only evil accompanied it.

The law of the Sabbath—one rest day in seven—is part and parcel of man's nature, which he violates only to his certain destruction.

Even Dr. Paley admits that as this law of the Sabbath appears at the very beginning of human history, it, undoubtedly, must have been intended for mankind. Man's whole physical, moral, and spiritual welfare is bound up in that demand of one day in seven, when he can recuperate from the stress and strain of six days of labor. Even civilization itself is involved in this God-appointed institution of the Sabbath.

Prideaux says: "It is not to be doubted that, if the Sabbath ever dropped from amongst us, the generality of the people, whatever else might be done to obviate it, would, in a few years, relapse into as bad a state of barbarism as was ever in practice among the worst of our Danish or Saxon ancestors."

Blackstone, the acute legal intellect, declares that "a corruption of morals usually follows a profanation of the Sabbath."

Just so certain as after toil man's nature requires rest, so certain it is that he brings sure destruction on himself when he fails to rest. God has set him the example of the *amount* of time to rest:—one-seventh of his time. Man is under just as much obligation to labor six days in a week as he is to rest one day. As this was a requirement for man in the beginning it is a requirement still. Whenever this law is violated, trouble always ensues. Labor and rest is God's law. Man changes it at his peril.

Just as God rested on the seventh day after the six days of creation, and, thus, in the very beginning of man's career on earth, instituted the Sabbath, so when in the long run of the ages man departed from Him, and forgot His law, God selected from the sinful mass of mankind a people, and, in due time, on the Mount delivered to Moses His laws, and occupying the central position among them is this law of the Sabbath. Alone of all the ten words, it is promulgated with an index finger:—"Remember!" Man had forgotten it in the past, and as a result had lost his moral and religious estate. God would guard against such a result in the case of His chosen people, and so He commands them to "*Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.*" The Day was *blessed* and *sanctified* at creation's dawn. Its benign rest was a requirement of man's nature, forever certified to by His Maker's own example. The needs of man's physical and moral nature required *six days of labor*; his spiritual, as well as his physical, nature required *one day of rest*.

Those who claim that the Sabbath was a temporary regulation, that served its day in the ceremonial system of the Jewish nation, and passed away with the old economy, forget that it is not placed in the list of the ceremonial regulations of the commonwealth of the Hebrew people. It is found in the Decalogue as its very key-stone. As the very support and buttress of the Law of God, it precedes the commandments against filial disobedience, theft, murder, adultery, and covetousness. If this fourth commandment could be stricken from the Table of the Law, all those commandments that inculcate duties to God, or pronounce

penalties upon those who dishonor Him, would fall to the ground; for men would soon forget Him, if they forget this day that is designed to hallow and glorify His Name.

Those who try to relegate the Sabbath Day to the limbo of the ceremonies and usages of a long-outgrown past, find little support in the position of the Lord Jesus Christ. What more pronounced recognition of the Sabbath could we desire than we find in His words: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore, the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

God instituted the Sabbath when man started forth on his career; He reaffirmed it with the most awful sanctions on Mount Sinai; God, the Son, authenticated it when on earth, and stripping it of the perversions with which the Jewish leaders had loaded it down, He declared that it was made for the highest and best welfare of man, and not as a weight and hindrance to his uplift and advancement Godward. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath as He is Lord of everything that ennobles and elevates man, and restores in him the image of God, broken and marred in the Fall. The Jews had made this Day a Jewish day; Christ restores it to its original purpose: a time set apart for man's truest development and advancement.

Since this day is of divine origin; since it is hallowed and forever set apart from low and sensual uses, how careful we ought to be that it may become a blessing and not a curse to us. Are we making it a help to higher and better and holier things when we seek our own selfish gratification during its holy hours? If we

make it a *holiday*, instead of a *holy day*, are we using it as God would have us use it? Is it right to take for *our own uses* the day God has *reserved for Himself*?

Away back in the hoary past the old seer Isaiah caught a glimpse of a people sick and tired of sin and a wilful perversion of God's good gifts, longing to return to the only satisfying Source of joy and happiness, and he tells them how the old waste places may be rebuilt, the breaches repaired, and the paths restored, and he clearly realizes that all true reformation and regeneration must be founded upon and built upon an acknowledgment of the supreme claims of the Sabbath: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, *from doing thy pleasure on my holy day*; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, *not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words*; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Far be it from us to inculcate any such gloomy conceptions of the Sabbath as that of the Scribes and Pharisees, or, in modern times, of the Puritans.

In the early church Christians were forbidden on the Sabbath to pray on their knees, but were exhorted to stand upright on this festal day and day of delights, rejoicing in the accomplishment of Christ's redemption. They did not consider Saturday as the proper day for this exultant rejoicing, as the Lord on that day lay cold and lifeless in Joseph's tomb. It was the glad day of His resurrection that they celebrated

—the day when Hope was born into a world of gloom and despair, and captivity was led captive, and gifts were given to men.

It was on the first day of the week—His resurrection day—that our Lord came to cheer and comfort the assembled disciples; it was on the first day of the week that the Holy Spirit took of the things of Jesus and showed them unto the assembled multitude, and Pentecost became a beacon light to Christ's church for all time. In all the early ages of the Christian church the first day of the week was the day on which God's people assembled to worship Him by word of exhortation and psalm of praise, and by contributing to the necessities of the needy.

John in the Apocalypse calls the first day of the week, "the Lord's day," and God has signally honored it in all the history of His church since Christ's resurrection, by blessing His people as they have assembled on that day to worship Him. Surely all history teaches that no people or nation can be truly great that fails to remember the Christian Sabbath Day to keep it holy! Surely no true child of God can dishonor His holy day by seeking his own pleasure or profit on this one day in seven in which God claims a peculiar right!

"IS THE YOUNG MAN ABSALOM SAFE?"

All Bible readers are familiar with the story of Absalom, David's beautiful, but wayward, boy.

In spite of all his faults and sins, the king loved him better than he loved any of his other children. It is pathetic to read of his longings for Absalom during his exile after he murdered his brother Amnon. And, then, when the young man, with David's permission, returned to Jerusalem, and with all the arts of the demagogue stole away the hearts of the men of Israel from the king and endeared himself to them, and finally raised a rebellion against his father and caused him to flee from his capital, he was still dear unto him.

As the host went forth to do battle against Absalom's army, David gave Joab and the other officers special orders to *deal gently with the young man*.

When the army of Absalom was defeated, and Absalom himself slain by Joab and those with him, and the couriers carried back the news to the king, the one question uppermost in his mind was, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" He seemed to care nothing for the fate of his army, in his yearning anxiety for his son.

When the terrible truth was told him, he broke out into a wail that has come ringing down all the ages, as a fit expression of the bitter agony that fills a parent's heart when a beloved child is cold in death: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" David covered his face, and continued to wail out the

grief that was breaking his heart until the shamed and abashed people slunk away, "as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle;" and we are told that "the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son."

How full of pathos is this story from the distant past! How those that have had an experience, similar in any part to David's experience of grief, feel that in his bitter wail over the death of his wicked, but beautiful, boy, he was but giving expression to a universal instinct of mankind:—a tender love for one's own flesh and bone.

David's question concerning the safety of Absalom is one that is of vital interest to every parent, aye, to every lover of God and country: "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

David seems never to have taken much, if any, care in training Absalom during all those formative years when his life might have been as the potter's clay in his hands, to mould as he pleased. After the wayward boy murdered Amnon, he was allowed to run away, and for several years lead his own wayward life, away from any good influence; and after he was allowed to return to Jerusalem, for a long time David did not see his face,—thus calling out all that was evil and resentful in his son's heart. When he was finally reconciled to him, so far as the record goes, he seems to have "kissed him," and to have known nothing more of what Absalom was doing, until, having stolen away the hearts of the people from the king, he raised the flag of rebellion, and drove his father from Jerusalem.

During all the years of Absalom's life, David seems never to have asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" It was only when he thought his physical existence was imperiled that he asked that question. Absalom was preparing himself for his awful end all the years that his father might have counseled and restrained him, but he was allowed to go on to utter destruction, unchecked.

All over the world to-day there are boys who need a watchful eye upon them, and wise counsel to lead them aright. God has given us children and he has admonished us to train them up in the way in which they should go, and has promised, if we do so, that when they are old, they will not depart from it. But even a casual observer cannot but be impressed with the lack of parental authority in these days of ours. The young man Absalom goes where he pleases, forms such acquaintances as are agreeable to him, and is impatient of the advice of father, or mother.

The good old custom of other and better days, of having the children attend not only the Sabbath School, but the church services, as well, seems well nigh to have died out.

The Sabbath day is no longer the sacred day of our fathers when the children were restrained from making it a *holiday*, and were taught God's Word around the family hearthstone.

All over our land how many fathers and mothers after they can no longer influence their children, are solicitous for their safety!

It is a fearful responsibility that God places upon parents. The children are *God's own children*, placed

in our keeping to train for His glory. He holds us to a strict account for our example before them, and we must not at our own and their peril, fail to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

If we *live* so that our children shall grow up an honor to their country and their God, we shall not at last be constrained to wail out when it is too late, "Would God I had *died* for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

However *moral* the parental training may be, the young man Absalom is not safe, unless he is taught to remember his Creator in the days of his youth. The evil days are surely coming—the days of stress and strain and temptation in young manhood and in middle age, when your child will need the secure anchor of faith to hold amid the fierce storms that will beat down upon his frail bark of life; and, then, if he has not a "desired haven" to beckon him on to his journey's end, what a shipwreck must his life be!

The young man Absalom is safe only when he has a personal interest in Jesus, Who alone offers a *Prepared Place* at the journey's end.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT

Through all the ages the test of a changed heart has come in times of trouble. It is easy to keep up a semblance of service to God when the sun shines and the birds pour forth their sweet carols. But when the sky is overcast and the rain pours down, and there are no feathered songsters to cheer the gloomy hour, and everything seems to go wrong, it is hard to have a faith that pierces all the darkness and gloom, and knows that God is still upon the throne, and all is well.

Surrounded by an awe-struck and admiring throng, Paul and Silas could well believe that God was with them, and that His co-operation was manifested by the power to cast out the evil spirit from the maid that brought gain her masters. But the real test of their faith came when the cruel stripes were laid upon them and they were cast into the gloomy prison. *They stood the test!* Prayer to God brought strength into their fainting souls, and those hardened fellow-prisoners and those stern, cruel, guards were astonished to hear at mid-night their glad song of praise to God—a song in the night.

Deep down in their souls there was a light not known on land or sea—a light that radiated from a Presence within, of which those other prisoners and the keepers had not the faintest conception.

No wonder that a faith, which, in its faintest expression, could remove mountains and cast them into the sea, could now rock that old prison to its foundations by an earthquake—could open wide those fast-

barred doors and lead forth these erstwhile weak and feeble men, now mighty to the pulling down of strongholds—girded with strength as they were lifted up into communion and fellowship with the one Source of power.

Robert Murray McCheyne's faith shone brighter and his song was sweeter, and stronger, and fuller, because he lived and sang in the night of affliction.

The heavy hand of affliction was laid upon a young girl just budding into all the grace and loveliness of womanhood. She was bed-ridden for many years. But God, her Maker, gave her one continuous song of joy and thanksgiving in all that long night of affliction. Never free from pain, sometimes gripped by excruciating agony, she bated not one jot of heart, or hope, but steered her frail bark of life over those storm-cast waters, headed always for the "desired haven." Others' wants were her care. She forgot herself in her ministeries of love to mankind. Her pain-throbbing fingers fashioned clothing for the needy, her aching brain devised plans of help for all the poor and neglected ones.

Surely that sick chamber was the very threshold of heaven; surely angels lingered there to do her bidding. How much richer and fuller was this sweet song in the night than any song that is sung in the bright, sunshiny, day of the life that knows not the deep, hidden things of God, which are learned only as He takes us aside from the garish glare of the sun of prosperity that He may impart to us His secret things?

William Cowper, the English poet, could never have written those soul-stirring hymns that have lifted

God's people heavenward on the wings of prayer and praise if the dark night of an awful malady had not drawn him close to God.

Clear and distinct, with no earth-born note to mar its unshaken faith, rises his song in the night of gloom that encircled him:—

“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His Own Interpreter,
And He will make it plain.”

It is said that “some birds are taught to sing by having their cage darkened. Then the little things long for the light, and in some way, realize they must make a sound that the master of their light and darkness may hear;—so they peep a faint note or two. These are faint at first, but they are always rewarded with a brief space of sun. And at length the small songster comes to know that if it would live in the light, it must sing; and finally its song is rare and beautiful.”

Poor, tired, sick, and doubting, soul, you can chase the dark clouds of disappointment, doubt, and fear,

away, and open your windows to the sunlight, if you will only sing in the night. Like the bird's poor feeble song at first, your song may become fuller, and richer and sweeter. God, answering to your faith, will shine more and more into your prison walls, and your song of faith will, at last, break down your prison doors and lead you forth, as the song of Paul and Silas lead them, into liberty.

David was cheered by songs in the night. He confidently cries out, from the fullness of a rich experience: "In the night His song shall be with me;" "I call to remembrance my song in the night;" "I have remembered Thy Name, O Lord, in the night." In the thirty-fifth chapter and tenth verse of the Book of Job, God is spoken of as giving "songs in the night."

Paul was enabled to endure, as seeing Him Who is invisible to sin-closed eyes, because of his songs in the night. His grand, triumphant, paean of victory could never have been sounded out for the encouragement of all the ages, if he had not flung open his prison doors and walked forth a free man in spite of clanking chains upon him, through the power of the songs in the night which God, His Maker, had given him.

It is in times of trouble and perplexity that God oftenest appears to us. He, in the person of His Son, was with Daniel in the lion's den; He appeared to Jacob, as, sore distressed with fear, he lay out under the stars with a stone for a pillow; it was to the distressed disciples on the way to Einmaus He walked and communed; and in the upper room He spoke peace to wild, surging, billows of doubt and fear that rolled over His disciples.

So, we may be assured that our God will give us songs in all our trials. He orders all the steps of His own. Though they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, He will be with them to comfort and keep them;—in the swelling of Jordan, His Almighty Arms will be underneath them and He will safely bear them across the river of death into the Promised Land; and, then, instead of the songs in the night, He will give them a song in the Day that will never darken into the night, whose sun will never go down—the song of Moses and the Lamb!

UNDER THE JUNIPER TREE

Elijah, the strong, fearless man of God who had defied the priests of Baal, and had hurled scorn and contempt at royalty itself, is in full retreat at the threat of the wicked Jezebel!

All the marvelous power that God had given him in enabling him to utterly rout and destroy the heathen priests, the long-wished-for rain that had come in answer to his prayers, all the present and former signs of His presence with him that God had given him, all failed to uphold and sustain him in the presence of this threat of destruction from the wicked queen.

Elijah was utterly demoralized! Strong, valiant defender of God's cause that he was, he has now become a coward, and flees for his life, and away out in the wilderness he lies down and prays that God, who has left him alone to battle for His cause, would mercifully take away his miserable life. He stops not to consider that the God who could answer by fire, and enable him utterly to defeat all his and God's enemies, could stay the murderous hand of Jezebel, and safely lead him through all dangers. He stops not to call to mind all his long life of ministry, sustained and empowered by Almighty Strength—all, all, is obscured and utterly absent from his mind because the heathen queen has devoted him to death.

We are wont to look with pity and mortification upon this spectacle of the routed and fleeing prophet. But do not all history and experience declare that Elijah is not an exceptional case, even among those who are strong and valiant for the truth.

Jonah was not a weakling, but he fled from the face of the Lord when commanded to go to Ninevah and warn that wicked city of its certain destruction if it did not repent; Job was strong and true in his loyalty to his God, but the time came, under continued trials, when he, too, broke entirely down, and the typical man of patience, of all the ages, cursed the hour of his birth, and longed for death.

Strong characters, strung to a tremendous tension, may utterly break down, at last.

As we, the men and women who are striving to do the commonplace duties of our little day, are confronted by trials and difficulties that tax our strength to the uttermost limit of our endurance, are tempted to give up, and run away from all our perplexing cares, and lying down in utter despair under the juniper tree, wish to end it all, we should pray the prayer of the old prophet for ourselves, that he prayed for the young man, that with opened eyes we might see the encamped hosts of God about us, far outnumbering all the hosts of Satan that beset us, as we think, on every hand.

This is a day of peculiar trial to the child of God. The powers of evil seem to be marshalling all their strength for the final onslaught upon all the citidels of our faith. Higher criticism, so called, would rob us of the Word of God, and with the destruction of this "Thus sayeth the Lord" would destroy the Sabbath Day, and open the floodgates of the Evil One, and thus turn in upon us the ocean of ungodliness that would sweep us into utter destruction.

God can do nothing with the discouraged man. Elijah needed to have his physical, mental and spiritual nature

toned up before he was worth anything to God or fellowmen. He was taught that there were still seven thousand loyal servants of his God who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Let us front our duties to God and fellowmen, assured that we are not alone. Let us arise from under the juniper tree and gird ourselves for a battle that must bring a certain victory!

THE ONLY BOOK

When Walter Scott lay dying, he asked his son-in-law, Lockhart, to bring him the book. Lockhart asked him, "What book?" The reply is the reply that might, more and more, be given by discerning souls, "There is but one book,—the Bible."

Friend and foe of God's revelation to man unite in declaring that the Book that conveys that revelation to man is the most remarkable volume in all the world. There is no philosophy like its philosophy, no poetry that can approach its songs, no eloquence that seems other than tame when compared with its eloquence.

Milton said, "There are no songs to be compared to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets."

Edmund Burke, the English statesman, felt that he needed the inspiration of Isaiah before making one of his masterful efforts, and we are told that before speaking in the House of Commons he always read a chapter of the incomparable prophet.

Daniel Webster said, "If there is aught of eloquence in me, it is because I learned the Scriptures at my mother's knee." It is said that this great orator took as a tonic, preparatory to his speeches in the Senate, the eighth Psalm and the fortieth chapter of Isaiah.

John Ruskin counted as the one *essential* part of all his education, the chapters of the Bible that his mother required him, when a boy, to commit to memory.

Sir Edwin Arnold said that he owed *everything* to the Word of God.

Lord Macauley speaks of this Book as "that stupendous work, the English Bible,—a book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."

Charles Dudley Warner tells us that "Wholly apart from its religious or its ethical value, the Bible is the one book that no intelligent person, who wishes to come into contact with the world of thought and to share the ideas of the great minds of the Christian era, can afford to be ignorant of."

And yet we are told some surprising things about the terrible ignorance of the Bible on the part of college students. In an examination in one of our colleges, twenty-two quotations from Tennyson's poems were given, in which there were references to the commonest of the passages of the Bible. Of thirty-four students, nine did not understand the reference in the quotation, "My sin was as a thorn among the thorns that girt thy brow." To eleven, "the manna in the wilderness" was unmeaning; and sixteen knew nothing of the "rock whence issued water." Out of thirty-four, only two knew anything of the turning back of the shadow on the dial in token of the lengthening of Hezekiah's life. Eight only could understand the reference to "Joshua's moon." "Baal" was unknown to twenty-two. "Ruth" was a closed book to nineteen of these so-called educated men. Eighteen had no light on "Pharaoh's darkness," and to twenty-eight, "Jonah's gourd" was an unknown quantity. An allusion to "Lot's wife" had a meaning to only nine. "Arimathea Joseph" was known to eleven only.

Simple tests, similar to this one, have been made of college students, from time to time, with an unvarying disappointment in the results received.

Great as is the literary merit of the Bible, its great value to the world lies in the fact that it is the revelation of God's will concerning man, and His plan for his redemption. From cover to cover the great central figure is the Lord Jesus Christ. On the very heels of the departure of the guilty pair from Eden, came the promise of the Seed that should bruise the serpent's head. The whole burthen of the types and symbols of the Old Testament was, the coming Messiah. The Old Testament is without meaning if Jesus Christ is not the Savior of man. The New Testament's *one* theme is the Person and Work and Death and Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, the Christ, the Savior of the world.

In the Gospels the Person of Jesus is predominate; in the Acts is the relation of the triumphs of those who accepted as authentic all that was said in the first four books concerning the Master; the Epistles but elaborate and expound the truths set forth by Jesus; in the Revelation to St. John on lonely Patmos the Person of Jesus is unveiled. We have here set forth His Person in the Gospels; His Power in the Acts of the Apostles; His wonderful Precepts in the Epistles, and the Order of Procedure, or Programme, in Revelation.

We cannot doubt that the Person presented to us in the Gospels is presented as the God incarnate; as a man unfallen and sinless—the perfect ideal of manhood, who alone can save man by the Cross, and preeminently declared Lord, not primarily by His incomparable teach-

ing, nor by His works on earth, but by the crowning miracle of His resurrection from the dead.

The type of religion set forth in the New Testament is the type of religion that Jesus taught on earth. All the long series of the triumphs of the Gospel have been won by the presentation of the Christ as presented in the New Testament—God incarnate—the Mighty Savior of the world.

The proclamation of the Gospel has ever proceeded on the credibility of the eye witnesses who proclaimed it at first. These men believed what they wrote, and throughout all the ages character of the highest type has been found in the men and women who have believed their words.

Jesus Christ gave no uncertain testimony to the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures. From his earliest childhood He was amenable to all the laws and ceremonies of the Old Economy. He recognized its authority. When He was tempted, He repulsed Satan's attacks by quoting from the words of the Law. A thorough search would discover not a single time when He ever doubted, or called in question, the authority of the Old Testament. He was ever ready to correct false interpretations of it, but so far from rejecting it, all His system of truth was based upon its declarations. He quoted freely from all parts of the Old Testament. There are about sixty-six quotations from the Pentateuch, or allusions to it, forty from Isaiah, thirty-six from the Psalms, and twenty-two from the Book of Daniel.

Surely this must prove that Jesus believed that the Old Testament was the inspired word of God, and, therefore, authoritative.

After our Savior's resurrection, while He still remained on earth, He continued to give His testimony to the trustworthiness of the Scriptures. That was a wonderful opening up of the Scriptures to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus:—"Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

In this exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures after His resurrection, He ratified all His utterances concerning them during His three years of public ministry. We find no countenance here of the theory of the Kenosis. Surely the Master knew what He was teaching, and spoke with the authority of God!

Jesus' declaration to the assembled disciples, after His resurrection, that His suffering and resurrection and all the results flowing from them were but a fulfilment of the things "written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms," is a declaration that *all* of the Scriptures testified concerning Him; for the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures were summed up as the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

Thus we have Jesus' stamp of approval of the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Surely no one who knows anything of Jesus Christ as He stands out as matchless in His grasp and wisdom, could conceive of His *ignorance* in His acceptance of the Old Testament as the infallible Word of God. Surely no one, who has caught even a glimpse of His absolute

truthfulness and sincerity, could suppose He would let the Jews go on believing that their Scriptures were of Divine origin, if they were not. Surely we must believe He was infallible, and that all opinions that conflict with His estimate of the Old Testament, are wrong.

Other books grow old and die, except as they are filled with the spirit of this Book. It never grows old. Its prennial freshness is the marvel of the ages. Here statesmen, and philosophers, and poets, have ever gathered inspiration. Here the saint has renewed his strength; he has been enabled to mount up with wings as eagles; to run, and not be weary; to walk and not faint.

In this Book Divine,—in this indispensable Book, we find all that we need, and come back to this never-failing Fountain of Truth from every incursion into the fields of literature, of science, of philosophy, that we may quench our thirst and be satisfied.

Whittier beautifully and truthfully sings:—

“We search the world for truth; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
From all old flower fields of the soul;
And weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read.”

GRAVEN UPON THE PALMS OF GOD'S HANDS

Standing in the midst of a doubting and cast-down church, the prophetic eye of Isaiah looks out far beyond the darkness and gloom that is about Him, and catches a foregleam of the coming glory of God's church when kings and queens shall minister unto her, and the Gentiles shall crowd her courts and do her service.

Zion was in the dust of humiliation and despondency, and cried out in the bitterness of her soul, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." But God's love for His Church is ever stronger than that of a mother for her child: "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

God has conferred the highest honor possible upon His church. Not only is her name graven indelibly upon the palms of His Hands, where it cannot be forgotten, but the maker of heaven and earth, the Lord of the whole creation, hath chosen Zion for His dwelling place, and He has promised to bless, abundantly, her provision and satisfy her poor with bread.

God so loved the church that He gave His well-beloved and only begotten Son to die for her.

"Her walls before Him stand,
Dear as the apple of His eye,
And graven on His hand."

Of course "the church," in the larger meaning of the term, implies the whole of God's redeemed people on earth and in heaven; but God has chosen to place men here on earth, and has, for the time being, surrounded them with physical conditions. Since man is a moral agent and responsible for his own actions, and not forced to decisions, God has set right and wrong before him; and, yearning over him with a Father's tenderest love, has established all the agencies of His church,—her Infallible Word, written and incarnate, her ministry, her sacraments, and all her sweet and heavenly ways, to win him to the right.

Shall we dare say that that church which the Lord Jesus Christ honored with His presence in the days of His flesh, to which He has given the ministry of reconciliation, is a thing of indifference, which we may use, or not, in our Christian life?

There may have been vitality in the religion of Martin Basle, the monk, who lived in the beginning of the Reformation, who wrote out his confession of faith in Jesus, and his sole reliance on the merit of His blood for his salvation; but the *earnest* Christian desires to do something more for his Master than secretly to write on parchment, "Holy Jesus, I acknowledge thy sufferings for me. I love Thee! I love Thee!" and then let the men and women of a hundred years die eternally, mayhap, whom his testimony, hidden by him for a century behind a stone in the wall of his chamber, might have helped on to God. How much grander the course of Martin Luther, who said, "My Lord has confessed me

before men; I will not shrink to confess Him before kings," or all the world.

We think the Lord Jesus clearly indicated, in His rebuke of the intolerant disciples who forbade the ministry of the man who followed not with them, that He has a people outside of His visible church, but as the church on earth is the army of the Great King, ought not all His soldiers to march under her banners? When the hosts of sin and Satan are marshalled against our King, shall we be mere bushwackers in His cause? Shall we not rather enlist in the ranks of His *known* soldiers, and bear all their privations and enjoy all their triumphs?

Men need the church for the development of all that is best and most virile in them, and God needs men to carry on His work in this world. "Come with us and we will do thee good," and thou shalt, under God, do us and God's cause good.

It was in the upper room among the professed followers of Jesus, that the baptism of fire and power came on the Day of Pentecost. So in all the ages since, God has peculiarly manifested Himself to His church, to those who confessed Him before men.

There is a solemn warning that comes to the man who seeks to live the *secret* Christian life, in the words of the Master Himself, who says, "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me *before men*, him will I confess also *before My Father* which is in heaven. But whosoever shall *deny* me before men, him will I also *deny* before My Father which is in heaven." Is it not perilously near a *denial* of our Lord when we are standing, so far as men can know, in the ranks of God's enemies.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar—
Who follows in His train?"

When God's people meet at His table to remember Him by partaking of the emblems of His broken body and shed blood, shall any true Christian fail to obey His last command as He ate the Last Supper with His own on earth, which He promised should be renewed in Heaven?

The church is a *Divine Institution*.

It is founded upon the Rock, Christ Jesus. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Its message is from the Bible, the Infallible Revelation to man from God.

There is much of moral sublimity and beauty in the ethical teachings of other systems of religion, but the note of authority, absolute and final, is found only in God's Holy Book.

All the meanings of the purifications of the Old Economy are found in the purification set forth in Baptism with water, the symbol of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

All the sacrifices laid upon Jewish altars find their antitype in the Lord's Supper, in which our Lord's supreme sacrifice for us is remembered. The church was instituted to propagate the Gospel until "the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Human learning may be made tributary to the preaching of the Gospel, but the preacher must determine, like

Paul, "to know nothing but Christ Jesus and Him crucified." This is the only "power of God unto salvation." Paul turned aside for the nonce when he seemed to be trying to tickle men's fancy by quoting a Greek poet on Mars Hill, and men mocked.

But the faithful proclamation of the Gospel has ever had God's blessing; for has He not said that His word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish that whereto He hath sent it?

The church was founded in the Garden of Eden, but its progressive history begins with the call of Abraham. In all his wanderings, he bore with him the destinies of the church of God.

The deep darkness that settled down upon the church in Egypt did not hide her from God's eye. Known unto Him were all her bitter cries and anguish as she passed through all those centuries of cruel bondage.

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform," and, no doubt the children of Israel in Egypt, and Moses, away off in the Midian desert, often thought He had forsaken His people. But through all those years He had heard their cry and had treasured up their tears in His bottle. The wilderness journey was long and tedious, and the lash was often laid upon God's rebellious children, but it all ended in the Promised Land.

Through many experiences, sad and joyous, the church was led on, until one still night on the Judean plains, strains of heavenly music greeted the ears of the shepherds, and the wondrous Star led them to the manger in Bethlehem. He who is the central figure of all of God's revelation to man has come. His is the last word

to mankind. Not as scribe and pharisee; not as Buddha, or Confucius, or Mohammed, does He speak. He speaks as one having authority. The Master calls to all men—the learned and the ignorant, the prince and the peasant, the rich and the poor, “Come unto Me and learn of Me.”

Without the church of the living God and her Christ, this world is but a dungeon to man. Look where he will, if he trust in himself, there is no hope, but deep, dark, impenetrable, gloom. But if he will but look up, like the prisoner of Chillon, he will see a rift in his dungeon wall. Dragging his chain, like that poor wretch, let him climb up and look through that rift. The green valley, the silver river and the blue vault of heaven shall reward him. But if he looks no further, he will die with the dungeon walls around him, and the sound of the clanking chain in his ears. But let him cry unto God, and the same Almighty Power that opened up the prison doors for Paul and Silas, can lead him forth to light and liberty.

THE GREAT DYNAMIC OF CHRISTIANITY

Ever since Jesus ascended to His Father, after having wrought out the great plan of salvation, the Holy Spirit has been in the world in a power of accomplishment that He never manifested until the risen and ascended Savior, true to His promise, sent Him to more fully seal His work in the souls of believers, and to arouse sinners to a knowledge of their fearful estate, and make known Jesus unto them.

The Spirit of God has been active in all history. He moved upon the chaos in the creation and brought forth out of the disorder, harmony and beauty.

Away back in the infancy of the race, the Holy Spirit was in the world, for we are told that He would not always strive with man.

The revelation that it has pleased God to give mankind in His written Word was given through the Holy Spirit, since the writers, we are expressly told, spake as they were moved upon, and guided, by the Holy Ghost. God gave His supreme gift to mankind through the agency of the Holy Ghost who overshadowed the Virgin Mary and thus brought about that stupendous mystery of the Incarnation of God.

The new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit. "Except a man be born anew," our Lord told Nicodemus, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." And the astonished Jewish ruler was told that this new birth was symbolized by the *Water of the Word* and the *power of the Spirit*. The

Holy Spirit puts into the soul that is dead in sin, a *new life*,—a *vital principle* of holiness.

On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down in great power upon the waiting disciples. The impulsive Peter, who, all through Christ's earthly ministry, was ever ready to speak, but mostly, unwisely, now delivered a marvelous sermon, which accomplished a wonderful result, because he was inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Before our Lord went away into Heaven, He told the church the source of all her *spiritual* power. "Ye shall receive power"—*dynamis*—"after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

That this promise was not given to the apostles alone, but to *all the disciples*, was proven by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon *all* assembled on the Day of Pentecost, so that all spoke with tongues the wonderful things of God, and all went out to spread the glad news of a risen and ascended Savior.

The Acts of the Apostles is a record of the wonderful results of this wonderful enduement with power.

The Spirit of Promise still abides with God's church. Though the wonderful manifestation of the Day of Pentecost has not been repeated on its scale and method, no one can limit the power of God to give these miraculous gifts to men. He gave them in the days of the Apostles, and He, no doubt, will yet repeat Joel's prophecy. The three infallible tests of the genuineness of these gifts are:—

1. The impossibility of any man's having a knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of serving Him as Lord, except by, and in, the Holy Ghost.

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2. Every gift, or manifestation, must be for the up-building of the church.

3. The gift, or manifestation, can never conflict with the written word, or apostolic authority.

So that we are authorized to call for these credentials from every one who claims these gifts

If the "miracle," the "healing," the "tongue," is a fact, then he who claims to be thus honored of the Holy Ghost must bring sufficient evidence to establish the fact, and if the fact is proven, it must be accepted.

But we need no miracles to evidence to us the presence of the Holy Spirit. In every good motive, in every holy purpose, in every desire to help our fellowmen, we have the proof of the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. We walk and talk with Jesus, day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment, because the Spirit of God is with us and takes of the things of Jesus and shows them unto us. Now, as in all the past, it is the province of the Holy Spirit to strive with man; and no calamity could be so awful as the withdrawal of the Spirit of God from a human soul; and yet we may reject Him, and so grieve Him by disobeying His wooing to better things, that He will, at last, leave us forever.

The Holy Spirit *seals* Christ's work upon the soul. Hence, we are exhorted: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

God planned salvation, the Son came into the world and on the altar of His Cross laid down His life to clear the way for the approach of the sinful soul to God, and the Holy Ghost applies this salvation to the soul.

The bones in Ezekiel's vision could never have lived had not the Spirit breathed on them; and the dead soul can never hear Christ's gracious call and words of pardon until they are breathed in upon him by the Holy Ghost.

What the church needs to-day is the Holy Ghost. "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase" only when the Holy Spirit is poured out.

The world can only be brought to the foot of the Cross by the Spirit of the Living God. He must "convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come."

The Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin,—not so much as indicated by the infraction of commandments, and the commission of overt acts—as of it, as it inheres in sinful attitude to God and to truth. Overt sinful acts are but the proof of a sinful heart—a heart in rebellion against God and truth. The determinative sin of our Lord's time, and of all time, is a rejection of God's own Son, in whom alone is eternal life. The Spirit of all truth convicts of sin—the rejection of Jesus, and not of *sins*, which only flow out from the fountain of sin and uncleanness within man.

It is the province, also, of the Holy Ghost to convict the world of righteousness—the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ Jesus. We have no righteousness of our own. Conformity to laws and traditions marked the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees whom Christ denounced as hypocrites. There is no righteousness that we can trust in but the righteousness revealed in Jehovah—*tsidkenu*—the Lord our Righteousness. The work of the

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Spirit is to convince the world that this righteousness is God's *gift*, and not the accomplishment of man.

Satan seemed to triumph when Jesus was nailed to the cruel tree and crucified. The wicked one then seemed empowered to judge, to pass sentence on Christ and His work and to trample Him and it under foot. But another judgment—the final judgment,—was coming! The Holy Spirit would warn men of that coming judgment, and save them from its condemnation. They turn away from His warning at their everlasting peril!

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS

At the coming of Jesus Christ the world had reached the height of its intellectual glory and the depth of its moral and spiritual degradation. From peasant to king, the world was rotten in iniquity. We are told that women so gloried in their shame that they counted their divorces by the number of rings on their fingers, and that society dames requested, and were given, decrees of defamation, in order that they might exhibit themselves upon the stage in lascivious dances in honor of their gods.

The licentious luxury in the days of Augustus Caesar in court and among people reached the depths of infamy. Gladiators by the hundred fought to the death at the same time in one arena. Caesar gave an exhibition in which six hundred fought and died with the cheers of a base multitude sounding in their ears. Pompey contributed to the brutal enjoyment by sending five hundred lions into the arena. The elaborate feasts were but drunken brothels where Bacchus and Venus reigned supreme.

In proud, intellectual, Greece, things were almost as bad. While Virgil was composing his Eclogues, while Horace was singing his Odes, and Livy was giving to the world his Annals, in Greece such painters as Zeuxis and Apelles had gained immortal fame by frescoing public and private houses. The marvelously beautiful statues of Phidias and Praxiteles are the wonder of modern art. Philosophy had soared on proud pinion far out of the sight of the multitude. Earthly culture had reached

the apex of her glory and supremacy. Yet there cannot be found in all literature an indictment so scathing as the arraignment Paul makes of those times in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Iniquity had wrought out her last result, and this civilization, rotten to the core, tottered to its fall.

Even among the Hebrews,—God's own chosen people,—sin was surely eating away their very vitals. The Pharisees and other religious teachers, under a fair external morality, were but whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. They stood in the very doorway of heaven, unfit to enter there, and effectually barring out those who might, but for them, have entered in.

The priests of Rome smiled in the faces of each other as they passed, when they thought of the hollow mockery of their service. Even the common people were tired of the imposture so long practiced upon them. They forsook their impotent gods, and, to a great extent, were without God or hope in the world.

All the proud philosophy of Greece did nothing to lift her out of the depth of her moral and spiritual degradation. The Platonic philosophy could not draw men into better things; nor could Stoicism harden them against the results of the coming ruin. Epicureanism might fling the reins on the neck of Pleasure, and cry out, "Let us eat and drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die," but to its followers, as to the poor fool of Holy Writ, there was a coming judgment.

When comes man's extremity, then comes God's opportunity. The world had been shaken to its profoundest depths by mighty wars. In the pause in the conflict of

the nations, when the victors looked out upon their kingdoms, and congratulating themselves in their achievements, gave themselves over to unbridled pleasure and lust, the Desire of all Nations came in answer to that unconscious longing of man for release from his own sinful self. Like an infant crying in the night, he knows not what he wants, but he realizes that he is weak and sick, and surrounded by the gloom of the night, and he cries out of his depths of want, for the light.

All the heathen religions had failed, all philosophy was vain,—from head to foot man was full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. He needed a balm for his hurts, he needed a physician for his sicknesses, and the Great Physician—the Desire of All Nations, came to his rescue.

He must be blind to all history who cannot see how God has, in all the ages, been preparing the way for the advent of His Son.

The Jewish nation was the custodian of the true religion and all its ritual of sacrifice and ceremony spoke of the Coming One. It was entrusted with the sacred writings containing all the prophecies, and all the truths that were there in germ, to spring up and flower and bring forth fruit when Christ Jesus came.

Its work was now ended. The rejected Messiah turns to the Gentile nations, who, all unconsciously had been preparing the way for their king. The Greeks perfected a language of rare force and power,—a tongue that the conquering Romans took up and carried to the ends of the earth. When under persecution, the disciples of Jesus were scattered into every land, they found,

wherever they went, a knowledge of the Greek language; and through this wonderful tongue the Gospel was preached in all countries. Like Cyrus, Caesar was guided by a Hand he knew not, for a mission of which he never dreamed. He thought he was laboring alone for his own glory when he built those magnificent roads to every part of his vast empire, but he was but the servant of his great Master, and but prepared the way of the Lord so that the heralds of the Cross found magnificent highways to the remotest provinces, and even to Great Britain, over which they carried the glad news that the Desire of all Nations had at last come on His mission of love and redemption.

Wherever to-day there is suffering and need, there is a remedy. Christianity has built her hospitals all over the world. No longer the afflicted babe must be exposed to cold and the savage beasts on the bleak mountains! No longer might makes right, and the weak are no longer trodden in the dust under the iron heel of power! Jesus preached a Gospel never heard on earth before,—a Gospel to the poor!

His is an evangel the world never dreamed of: "The meek shall inherit the earth." In His Kingdom, not they who are served, but they who serve, are chief.

All the power of the Roman Empire was pitted against this Gospel which sought to reverse all the maxims of all the religions and philosophies of the earth. But the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church, and the proud Caesar of imperial Rome must bow to her. All the resources of the intellect and ingenuity of man has tried to stay the onward triumphant march of our King,

but the kingdoms of this world are fast becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

The world has found the object of its desire. It has felt after God through all the centuries, and has tried to believe that it had found Him in idol and fetich, but the unsatisfied soul could not rest in the falsehood, and hoping to find the true God, she must needs inscribe a statue, standing amid known, but futile, gods, to the Unknown God.

He whom the earnest souls of all nations felt after, if perhaps they might find Him, has come to satisfy all their longings, and to bring back the lost children to the loving Father's House. If they but let Him, He will, at last, bring them all to the Desired Haven!

THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Doubt on any subject weakens and annoys. Man can accomplish very little in any enterprise if he doubts the usefulness, or the desirability, of carrying it forward. In a very profound sense, "He who doubts is damned," in the realm of the physical, the intellectual, the moral, or the spiritual. The men who have accomplished things in this world, were the men who had faith.

Abraham believed in God and in the sacredness of his calling, and it made him the man of force and power that he was. Moses was enabled to formulate the laws of all enlightened nations because he was a man of faith.

If one must have faith and assurance to rise above the common herd in the avocations of this life, surely he who claims to be a Christian,—to be linked with God in the divine life, must know that he has a risen and triumphant Lord, and that he is acknowledged as a follower of that Divine Master. There is much of mystery about the new birth. Our Savior, in that wonderful night conference with Nicodemus, speaks of it as comparable in its incomprehensibility to the wind that comes, no one knows from whence, and goes, no one knows whither. And yet the new birth is a *fact*,—known and read of all men,—in its visible results in the lives of those who have experienced it. No one can be a child of God and not *know it*. Sometimes the witness of the Spirit may be *indistinct*, or even *absent*; but at other times,

**"The Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God."**

We are made certain of our *personal* interest in the salvation wrought out by Christ Jesus, by *the witness of the Spirit*. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

The Spirit of all truth cannot witness to a lie. So he whose life is not full of the Spirit of Jesus, cannot claim that he has the witness of God's Holy Spirit. There are other voices that speak into the ear of man. Satan often comes as an angel of light, and would even deceive the very saints, if that were possible. So, we are warned to try the spirits,—to take heed to the quality of the voices that we hear, that we be not deceived.

The Spirit takes the things of Jesus and shows them to us. He leads us to love our Lord and to do His commandments: "If ye love me, keep my commandments," our Lord pleads with us.

The Christian may be assured of the secure foundation of his hope by bringing his experience in touch with God's Written Word. There he may read his title clear to mansions in the skies, if he, indeed, has any title.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Does he believe in Jesus and trust in Him as his *personal* Savior? Then, he needs not to die to enter upon his inheritance of eternal life. It is his *present* possession: he *hath*,—not shall have,—but *hath*—even *now*,—*everlasting* life.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Have you been born again,—*born from*

above? If you have new affections, if the old loves, and the old companions, and employments, and enjoyments, have been replaced by higher, and better, and heavenly things, then you may *know* that you have been regenerated. Do you delight to do God's will? "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Have you a love for all God's people, and do you seek their companionship rather than that of the world? "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."

Does the professed follower of Jesus Christ daily take up his cross and tread in the footsteps of his Master? "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Has the professing Christian this world's goods, and is not using them alone for the glory of God, or has he intellect, or influence, or any other gift, that he is not using for Jesus? To such a one comes the testing command: "Go, sell all that thou hast, and come and follow Me."

If we are Christ's, all that we have, we must lay at His feet. He may give it back to us to *use for Him*, but we must never forget that it is only *held in trust* for our Lord.

What kind of lives do we professing Christians lead? Do we strive to live *sinless* lives? Do we feel that Christ's honor is in our keeping, and that we must not dishonor Him by sinful lives? "Whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin."

Are we, day by day, asking after the path of duty and of right? Are we led by the Holy Spirit? If so, then

the Word tells us, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

The Bible is our abstract to our heavenly inheritance. If we have a piece of property, we would be foolish not to find out from the abstract office whether our title is good. If we would be sure of our heavenly inheritance, let us be assured that we have the spirit of sons. Do we trust in the Father? Do we feel that we are, even now and here in this world, at home in our Father's House? Are we the children of a King, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom that cannot be moved, or overthrown? Then our minds are at rest: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."

Trust in God, whence issues perfect peace, arouses the Christian to the necessity of *work*. He has a zeal for his Father's interests. When the fields are white unto the harvest, he cannot sit down in idleness, and bring no golden sheaves into His Father's treasure house.

Paul never remitted his efforts until the axe of the executioner ended his course on earth. He *enlisted for life* in the service of his Master.

In all our work and endeavor, if we are Jesus' purchased possession, we *rest in Him*. He who has rolled his burden of sin and care on his Savior, leaves it there. Why should he fret and worry? Has not the Master called him to perfect peace?

Like Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, he will some fair morrow look out of the Chamber of Peace upon the Delectable Mountains, and like him, too, he shall be

enabled to sing with all the assurance of a well-grounded certainty of salvation:—

“Where am I now? Is this the love and care
Of Jesus for the men who pilgrims are
Thus to provide that I should be forgiven
And dwell already the next door to Heaven?”

SEEKING THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND

Isaiah is the great evangelical prophet of the Old Testament. In his fifty-third chapter the great foundation truth of the world's redemption is laid. Here we see the only hope of a lost and ruined world—the Messiah who was “wounded for our transgression;” who was “bruised for our iniquities;” the One on Whom “the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all.” In the fifty-fourth chapter we behold the church erected on this all-sufficient Foundation—a suffering and dying and triumphant Savior. The world-wide invitation is made from the door of God's church flung wide open in the fifty-fifth chapter of the prophet:—“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.”

In the sixth verse of the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah occur these remarkable words: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.” Jesus tells us He came to *seek* and save the lost; yet we are also told we must seek Him, if we would find Him. Though He stands at the door and knocks, it will not be opened unto us unless we, too, knock.

Though the door of grace stands wide open, and “who-soever will may come,” yet it all avails nothing unless we “*strive* to enter in.” The water of life is without money, and yet we must “buy” it. The gift of eternal life is urged upon us, but God says, “I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel.”

God forces no man to come unto Him. He declares His willingness to save, and then enforces our duty to seek Him. This seeking of the Lord is a heart seeking: "Then shall ye seek Me, and ye shall find Me, when ye seek Me with the whole heart."

God will never be found by him who seeks Him half-heartedly. It is with the *whole* heart, with the earnestness and zeal of one who seeks for hidden treasure, that God is to be sought.

The world seeks earnestly for wealth, honor and fame, and shall God be sought in a languid and indifferent manner?

We gather some light on the kind of seeking that will find God when we call to mind the persistent and importunate pleading of the heathen mother for her child. She would not be silenced by any of the rebuffs with which Jesus tested for her, and those around Him, her faith; but in true humility, acknowledging all that He said, she still cried out in the anguish of her soul, for help for her child. Bartimaeus could not be silenced by the opposing throng who ordered him to cease his petitions, but "cried out the more exceedingly." The friends of the palsied man were not to be defeated in their purpose to bring their friend into the presence of Jesus that he might be healed, and climbing upon the roof of the house, they made an opening and let him down into the presence of the great Physician.

While Christ was to be found, while He was near, was the opportunity of these seekers for blessings at His hand. Had they waited for to-morrow, they might have never had another opportunity of receiving the boon they

sought. How much less earnest are many who think they are seeking the Lord! For earthly favors these poor suppliants leaped over every obstacle to reach the Master with their requests. For eternal life men seek God as though there were no need of haste, since He may ever be found.

If we seek the Lord earnestly He will be found of us. There is an implied promise of success in our passage of Scripture, for the command to seek must mean that God can be found, or else, He would be trifling with us when He tells us to seek Him. "Whosoever will may take of the water of life freely." Our sins rise up to condemn us, and we draw back and wonder whether God can receive us, all besmirched with sin as we are. But the Holy Spirit shows us One Who was "wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities," and who "made His soul an offering for sin," and we can doubt no more.

God has made a covenant with our Lord Jesus Christ, in which He gave Him a people to redeem, and since Jesus has suffered and died for us, and has thus paid the price of our redemption, God cannot turn away from any soul that accepts the atonement made for him on Calvary.

Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was sought out by David when he came to the throne, that he might fulfill his blood covenant with his bosom friend. The afflicted son "lame on both his feet" from childhood, thought that David sought to do him evil, and attempted to escape from him. When he was at last found and brought into the presence of the King, he was shaken with great fear,

and fell on his face before David. But David reassured him with the gracious words, "I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan, thy father's sake."

David was not looking at Mephibosheth's deformity. It mattered not to him though he might have been as the poor cringing wretch said of himself, "a dead dog." He was thinking of the young man's father, Jonathan, and his love for him, and his covenant with him, when the blood of each flowed into the veins of the other. That covenant could never be broken. If we ever come to Jesus we must feel all unworthy of the free pardon that is offered us. But away from our own unworthiness we are to look, to the worthiness of our Substitute and the covenant He entered into with the Father in our behalf. No, it is not our *personal* worthiness that commends us to God, but it is our worthiness in Christ Jesus, who has obeyed the demands of the Law for us, and has imputed His own righteousness to us, so that we stand in God's sight as worthy of eternal life as His own Son.

While there is no doubt of the acceptance of any one who will come to Jesus, yet he must seek Him if he would find Him and be found of Him.

There is a world of warning in the words, "while He may be found," "while He is near."

There is certainly coming a time when He cannot be found, when

"His feet departing, ne'er return."

There is drawing on apace a season when we may find that He is no longer near.

Noah preached faithfully a hundred and twenty years to the antediluvians, but they would not heed his words

of warning. At last the door of the ark was closed and they were without, and God was no longer to be found, but was afar off. The five foolish virgins found out, at last, that there is a limit to God's forbearance, and that the time to shut the door of mercy will surely come.

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near."

"*Now* is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation." The wicked man may now forsake his sins and the unrighteous man his thoughts. The compassionate Savior now stands with outstretched hands, with the nail prints upon them, and beseeches us to come unto Him and be saved. But death must soon end our opportunity to accept the gracious pardon of our sins. "As the tree falls, so it must lie" to all eternity.

Across the great gulf-fixed, Lazarus could not bear even one drop of water to cool the parched tongue of the rich man in the torments of hell, and no one could come forth from that place of despair to bear any message to friends left behind. Fixed, and fixed to all eternity, is the fate of those who will not hear Moses and the prophets here on Mercy's side the grave,—sealed is the fate of those who will not heed the call of Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, while the day of salvation is theirs. There is no Second Probation in God's Word—Jesus dealt faithfully with men when He warned them of the danger of delaying to make their peace with God through His sacrifice.

"To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." "Behold, *now* is the day of salvation."

DOING ONE THING

The great Apostle to the Gentiles was a man of pronounced decision of character. Before his conversion, when he thought he was doing God service, he persecuted the Church of Christ relentlessly. When the Lord met him on the way to Damascus and thoroughly convinced him that he was fighting against God in persecuting His followers, this man of decision and principle turned around, and, ever afterwards, espoused Christ's cause, and gave to the proclamation of the Gospel all his magnificent powers. Henceforth, he determined to know nothing but Christ Jesus and Him crucified. All his proud position among his people he surrendered, and became an outcast from home and friends and nation, that he might fulfill the mission given him by His Master. One thing claimed all his attention. Whether he made tents, or preached the Gospel, God's glory was his object—all else was transitory and fleeting—not to be weighed in the balance with the stupendous concerns of eternity. Paul had a proud past in which he might have gloried. He was a ruler among his people, and although a young man, he was known as an intellectual power among the learned men of his nation. He had all the intellectual training requisite to fit him for an honored and brilliant career, but he forgot it all, and *pressed*, with all the strength and ardour of his being, toward the things of God and His Kingdom that lay out before him. A goal beckoned him on, a heavenly vision was ever before him, and casting aside every weight and the sin that did beset

him, he pressed forward to the attainment of the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus.

Though our service may not be as powerful, or fruitful, as that of Paul, we must be like him in the singleness of our aim and devotion to God's cause. "This one thing" we, too, must do,—forgetting all in the past that would divert our minds, disregarding all the employments, or pleasures, of the present that might detract from the efficiency of our service, and seeking in the future only God's glory in the advancement of His Kingdom, we must press forward, every muscle stretched to its utmost tension, as those who run in a race reaching forward for the prize of our high calling, with an earnestness born of a consciousness of working for eternity. Such zeal must bring glorious success.

We can bring no divided service to God. He is a jealous God, who will not be satisfied with a *partial* obedience. Unlike the ancient Israelites, we must not halt between two opinions—we must come out, decidedly, for, or against, God. We cannot serve God and Baal.

All the great and mighty ones of the past have been men of one great business. A divided zeal would never have brought Columbus to the shores of a new world. Napoleon could never have won his marvelous victories had not the one thing—ambition—beckoned him on. The student must forget the blandishments of pleasure, or the call of wealth, and while others sleep, or mingle with the gay throng, he must toil upward in the night. Our Lord has told us that he who would come after Him, must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him.

The church today is weakened, and emasculated of much of her power, because there are so many on her rolls who run after the world and give God no service; or, at most, a half-hearted service. Such service His soul loathes. He would we were either cold, or hot. If we are lukewarm, He has said He will spew us out of His mouth.

There is much of spiritual dearth in the church because so many of her ministers have turned aside to the preaching of literature, or science, or politics, and have neglected the old, old, story of Jesus and His love, which alone they were called of God to proclaim to a dying world. The apostle Paul was abundantly able to preach the learning of his day, but he was true to the commission received from his Master, and determined to know nothing but a crucified, risen, and ascended Savior.

Christ is Head over all things to His Church, and He will make all kings and nations, at last, bring their glory into her sacred precincts.

Some day we shall see that all things were created, existed, and fulfilled their mission for the glory of God. "This one thing"—Christ and His glory,— is the great magnet that is drawing, irresistibly drawing, all things unto itself.

God has set His glory above the heavens. Marvelous as are the revelations of modern astronomy, inconceivably grand as is the physical universe, God's glory in the redemption of man is the climax of it all.

WALKING WITH GOD

We are told that "Enoch walked with God and was not; for God took him." What a picture of delightful companionship have we in these words! Away back in the youth of the world God walked and talked with this saint of his from his early manhood through a long life. What need had Enoch of any of the appliances and appurtenances of our modern civilization with such a close personal friend as His God. How calm and peaceful his translation, when, one day God, desirous to have His servant in His own house on high, came and removed him from earth to heaven!

Can it be said of any of us that he walks with God? To walk with God we must love the things that God loves, and hate the things that He hates. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" God walks in the way of holiness. If we would walk with Him, we, too, must love holiness.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was on earth He honored the Sabbath Day and kept it holy, and His place was never vacant in the Sanctuary. Do we keep holy God's own day, and are we glad when they say unto us, "Let us go into the house of the Lord?"

What is our attitude toward our fellow men? Do we strive to raise up the fallen, and do we feel that we are our brother's keeper, and responsible to the full extent of our influence, or power, for his well-being?

To walk with God is to commune with Him in prayer. Is the hour of prayer indeed sweet to our souls? Do we approach God as our Heavenly Father, Who is interested in us, and far more willing to give good gifts to His children than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children.

We may walk with God to all places of legitimate pleasure, but He will not go with us to those places where He is dishonored. He who takes part in the lascivious dance, or who enters the resort of lust and intemperance, may be sure that God enters not there with him.

If we cannot have God's companionship here on earth, we may be sure we shall not be fit for His companionship in Heaven. Life is not possible out of its environment. The fish dies, if taken from its native element, and man perishes when he is taken out of his environment of air. So the earthly, the sensual, and the devilish cannot live in the pure spiritual environment of Heaven. Judas must needs go unto his *own* place—the place for which his sin had prepared him. So, if we would have eternal life and the blessedness of communion with God and all that that implies, we must come in contact with the eternal here in this world. "He that hath the Son"—who has Him as a Friend and Companion here,—“hath the life” abiding in him here before God takes him, as He took Enoch of old.

Surely Christians cannot be indifferent to reforms in the whole social, religious, and political fabric of our civilization, if they walk with God.

We are told that Noah walked with God, and we do not wonder that he rang out no uncertain note of warning and of exhortation to the men of his day.

The fact that his message was not heeded did not close his lips until he entered into the ark and the floods swept away those who heeded not his warnings.

If we walk with God, we will obey Him. Ours will never be the excuse that protests against iniquity accomplish nothing. We must cry aloud and spare not, and leave the result with God.

It may not be in our time, but in God's own good time, He will see that every effort made for Him shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish the thing whereto He sent it.

Earnest-minded Christians, beset as are all persons who strive to lead purposeful lives, with manifold temptations and interruptions, need hour by hour the presence of God with them. The daily round of duties is irradiated with a heavenly halo when He goes with us into their performance; and, then, when the trying hour comes, as come it must, to every soul of man,—when the deep, dark, shadow falls across the threshold, we will be conscious of His presence with us as He was with the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. And the flames of affliction cannot hurt us, because their Master can stay their power to harm.

“O, for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb.”

A PRESUMPTUOUS SIN

This is an age of irreverence. The sanctity of the Sabbath Day is no longer regarded as it once was. Sacred things are, by many, treated with contempt, or are passed by with indifference.

We think this lamentable state of affairs finds its explanation in the widespread profanity that characterizes our times.

Men take God's Holy Name in vain in even their ordinary conversation. They who would resent the flippant use of the name of a relative, or friend, or, indeed, of any one of standing, or character, will use the Name of the Holy One of Israel as a mere bye-word, or expletive. Even professing Christians are not guiltless of this awful sin.

This third Word of the Ten Words delivered to Moses amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai still stands in the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain."

God's Name comprehends all His character, and the attributes by which He has made Himself known. To take His Name in vain is to bandy before a thoughtless and profane world, the holiness, the goodness, and the truth, of the omnipresent and omnipotent God. Surely it is only the intercession of the ascended Savior that saves him who could thus insult the majesty of God, from instant death. Under the Old Dispensation, before Jesus had borne our sins in His own body on the tree, the punishment of blasphemy was death.

This sin is grounded in a felt, or expressed, contempt for God, or any of His laws, and is hateful to God and absolutely ruinous to the soul.

God has not forgotten His honor. His holy Name that commands the tribute of angels and saints above, is surely worthy of man's reverence, and God has expressly declared that He will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain. That Name which safeguards the interests of individuals and the State in courts of justice, surely is not to be taken in vain in our converse one with another.

The breaking down of reverence for God's Holy Name opens up the flood-gates of all iniquity. The profane swearer would draw back with horror, perhaps, from the infraction of other commandments in the Decalogue, but he does not stop to consider that his profanity is, in the sight of God, being as it is, a direct sin against the Supreme One, a worse sin than the breaking of the commandments of the second half of the Moral Code, which are concerned with man's interests and well-being.

Doubtless many who are guilty of this great sin have never realized its enormity in God's sight. If we must give an account to God for every idle word we speak, how can we escape an awful judgment if we persist in trailing the matchless honor of God in the dust and mire of all our varied life of passion and pleasure?

May we not presume too much on God's forbearance and mercy when we do not show Him the common respect we accord to our fellowmen, as we come in contact with them day by day?

"Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain."

THE BEAM AND THE MOTE

Nothing is so easy as to find fault with those with whom we come in contact. Generally the man with a beam in his eye is the very person to detect a mote in his brother's eye. Others can see his glaring faults and sins, but the beam in his eye seems to blind him to his own demerit and to magnify the short-comings of his fellow-man. Our Lord calls such a man a hypocrite, and demands that in order that he may be prepared to rightly judge his brother, he cast out the beam from his own eye.

An old fable runs that in the creation of the world, Jupiter made a man, Neptune created a bull, and Minerva erected a house. Momus, standing idly by, criticised the man because he had no window in his breast; the bull was imperfect since his horns were not placed under his eyes; and the house ought to have been built upon wheels so that it could have been moved away from disagreeable neighbors.

For this senseless fault-finding we are told that Momus was cast out of the councils of the gods. But if he could not remain in the heavens, we are sure he is now with us, and has been from the beginning. It is a duty to see the motes, or beams, in our fellowmen's eyes and to strive to cast them out, but not until we ourselves have clear vision.

It was required by the Levitical law that the sinner should be warned of his sin: "Thou shalt . . . rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." In

the New Testament we are told to "Reprove, rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

He who is best qualified for finding fault with his fellowmen is the man who is most disinclined to do it, and acts from a strict sense of duty when he does bring himself to the disagreeable task.

If it is necessary to discuss a brother's faults, go and talk the matter over with him. Even when he has wronged you, "go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone." Backbiting and gossip are not only great sins, but they are mean and contemptible. Under the Old Dispensation there was a command that forbade tale-bearing—the besmirching of reputations: "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people;" and this prohibition was enforced by the authority of God Himself, who immediately adds, after these words, "I am the Lord."

When Paul found it necessary to reprove Peter he did not backbite him, but withstood him to his face. He accomplished his object, and Peter was ever afterwards his friend. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," but a spirit of censorious fault-finding is pregnant with evil, and evil only.

No poor sinner ever came into Jesus' presence who was not rebuked by those sinless eyes, but how gentle and yet how effective was the removal of the mote from the eye! The woman at the well of Sychar felt deep down in her soul the Master's condemnation of her sin, but this meeting with Jesus was the salvation of her soul. Who doubts that the woman, dragged into the Master's presence by those hoary old sinners, the beams in whose eyes

kept them from seeing that they were really greater sinners in the sight of God than was she, went away and obeyed the parting injunction, "Sin no more."

How often our disposition to find fault with our neighbors is engendered by a spirit of envy, or hatred, because of some gift of theirs which we covet, or some injury we have received, or imagine we have received, from them. Often times a wounding of our vanity, or it may be, an unveiling of ourselves by some friend, or neighbor, grows into a mighty beam, that we must pluck out, or the moral and spiritual order of the universe will be disturbed, or overthrown!

In all our dealings with our fellowmen, we should look out for the good that is in them, rather than for the evil. He who lives closest to God is the most conscious of his own faults, and more and more is dominated by that love that "thinketh no evil."

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." We dare not pray that prayer, if ours is not a spirit of love, and forgiveness, and forbearance, toward all mankind. If the beams of self-love were taken out of our eyes; if we could put ourselves in our brother's place, and view life from his position, surely we would not see so many notes that we feel sure must be extracted, however the operation may give discomfort and even pain.

A LOST AND A SAVED LIFE

The conception we have of life is the measure of our lost, or saved, condition. Before Jesus taught men that one's truest life consists not in the abundance of its possessions, but in its capacity for service, in using its possessions for God and fellow-men, the world counted that the successful life that held in its grasp most of wealth, or pleasure, or honor, however gained. He who was served was great. He who served was but a chattel, valuable only as he had power to minister unto his master.

Jesus was opposed and persecuted because He was the Friend of the poor and oppressed, and arraigned the proud and self-sufficient scribes and Pharisees of His day. He laid emphasis on character, and not on reputation; on service, and not on possessions, or rank. So He rang out to the men of His time, and to all succeeding ages, the warning against thinking life was a matter of earthly gain, or pleasure, or honor. To those grasping after the honors, or wealth, or pleasures of this life, He would point to the only real road to success: Losing life in service for God and humanity that life might be saved in the highest and best sense. "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not."

Zacchaens saved his life when he grew rich by farming the revenue, when he robbed the people to the full extent of his power. No doubt men thought his great riches made his life worth living, and, no doubt, to his seared conscience, his possessions gave great satisfaction. But Zacchaens put a different estimate on these things when

Christ came into his life on that day when the Master called him to the true life. It was then that he was willing to make restitution. His silver and his gold ceased to be his gods when the expulsive power of a new and true affection cast them out of his heart.

To one standing on a mountain side, the things in the valley become mere pigmies. So to Jesus, high and lifted up above the low level of the thoughts and aspirations of the men of His time, the things of this world looked exceedingly small. As He looked down upon the kingdoms of this world from the mountain height, Satan's temptation was powerless.

Countless thousands have lost their lives in gaining all that the world could give of honor, or pleasure. To Queen Elizabeth a moment of time was worth millions, when in that moment she might repent of all her past sins, and make her peace with her God.

The merry round of pleasure, the thrusting of all serious concerns from the mind that joy may be unconfined, must end, at last, in the bitter wail of the richest and most honored King this world has ever seen: "Vanity of vanities,—all is vanity."

Beckoned on by a higher purpose than mere material things, when Themistocles was asked why he did not gather up the golden chains and other rich spoils scattered along the path of the fleeing enemy, he is said to have replied: "Thou mayest, for thou art not Themistocles." Shall not the Christian, with a far higher and vaster vision than that which caught the eye of this heathen Greek, refuse to lose the higher life in grasping after the lower?

Christ must needs suffer that He might save us. He could not come down from the cross and draw the world unto Him.

We, like the great Apostle, must be able to say: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ must be supreme in all our work and pleasure. When we learn that "life is more than meat"—that there is something higher, and better, and holier, than self-gratification, that all the things we possess here, whether of wealth, or mental power, or influence, are worse than useless,—yea, are of deadly peril, unless they are used to serve God and fellow-man, then we are saving our life, we are building mansions for ourselves and others out of these material things that otherwise must perish in the using, and drag us down to destruction with them.

Service is the key-note of the saved life. The story is told of an old monk to whom came the Savior in a vision. The old saint's soul was transported with bliss in beholding his Lord, when a knock came at his door that called him to dispense alms to a poor, wretched man. This call to duty did not arouse the monk from the rapture of his vision, until the Savior gave him a grieved look that he could not fail to understand. When he returned from the performance of his ministry to the poor man's needs, he found his Lord still in his presence, and Jesus told him that He would have left him had he failed to heed the call of duty.

We cannot spend our lives in meditation and prayer and vision, however large a place these must have in our Christian experience, but out into the world so full of

suffering and want we must go, to raise up the fallen, to bring in the wanderers from the fields of sin. Even our Savior could not remain forever on the mount of transfiguration, but He must fulfill His ministry up and down the hills and vales of Palestine. He must have time for prayer, but He must rise up a great while before day and gather strength in secret communion with His Father for effective work for those whose lost condition lay so heavily upon His great heart.

Is ours a lost, or saved life? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

IN OUR FATHER'S HOUSE ON HIGH

Away back in the dim past, out of the agony of his woeful experience, the man of Uz, conscious of the vanity of all material things, and longing for another and a better existence, asks the question of the centuries: "If a man die, shall he live again?"

When life was filled to overflowing with all that could give satisfaction, when his wealth and his family were still with him, Job, doubtless, gave himself little concern about the future. It is easy to trust in God when we are wafted over life's course by fair winds, when there is no cloud to obscure the sun, when prosperity smiles upon us, and there is nothing in all the world to make us afraid. But one must have a well-grounded faith in God to press right onward with an undimmed faith when he is stripped of all his possessions and is threatened with total shipwreck.

Out of all our troubles, out of all our doubts and fears, if we, like Job, wait all the days of our appointed time, till our change come, we, too, like this old worthy of the centuries gone by, shall hear God's call, and shall joyfully answer Him as He opens wide the portals of His House on High and bids us come in. Surely He who numbers all our steps, who watches over us with a special care, that notes the falling of our every hair, will, at last, gather us from the wild, tempest-tossed, ocean of this life into the calm and peace of the Desired Haven.

That we shall live after the death of the body, is so firmly believed by universal mankind that this assurance

becomes an axiom. In the face of the denials of science, in spite of all the learned efforts of materialistic philosophy to prove that man is as the beasts that perish, this belief in immortality persists, and, without fail, answers the hoary question of the ages with a confident and triumphant affirmative.

The poor, untutored savage, knowing nothing of the proud wisdom of this world, reaches the hand of mere instinct through all the darkness of death and the grave, and lays hold of "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and expresses his assurance that his loved one will live beyond this life as he buries with him his bow and arrow that he shall need in the happy hunting grounds in the life to come. The Hindu widow ascending the funeral pyre, voices her belief in immortality, when, unbinding her hair, she prays to Brahma that she may enjoy with her husband as many joyful years in the better world as there are hairs in her flowing tresses. The Egyptians clasped the fingers of their dear dead little ones about trinkets and toys, and wrote upon the byssus bands the glad assurance that they would awake on the morrow. The Greeks and Romans believed in the immortality of the soul. The old Greek sage, Socrates, with hemlock cup clasped in his hands, discoursed eloquently of the coming life. This belief in a hereafter is, indeed, warp and woof of our mental constitution. If man ever gets rid of it, it is after he has persistently denied the primary laws of his nature, and, like the fool of Holy Writ, has cried out, "No God!" For, as surely as there is a God, and He has constituted us as we are, there is a life beyond this

life. If there is not, then this longing for life after death is the only longing of humanity that has no answer. Our minds long for nourishment, and God has given them problems to solve, and satisfaction in the solution. The eye finds objects upon which to fix, and feasts on beauties all around, the ear is made for sound, and there is the sound of our dear ones' voices and sweet music to satisfy its demands; the sense of taste has a provision for its satisfaction, and this is true of all our senses. Man's heart longs for an object to love, and that object is somewhere to satisfy that love. But we are told by some of the wise ones of earth that this instinct for immortality—this longing for life after this life's fitful dream is over, has no answer—that the hand reached forth into the darkness has no clasp by a hand beyond the portals of the tomb.

Quite a number of noted scientific men have, in recent years, come to recognize the fact that the brain of man is only the instrument through which the soul expresses itself. Among these well-known men, we may mention such leaders of thought as Sir Oliver Lodge, William James, Sir William Crookes, and Henri Bergson,—all of whom are firm believers in a force in man back of, and separate from, the brain, whose organ of expression it is.

Numerous reasons have been given for the belief that the brain and the Ego are two factors, and not one, in man's constitution; and among many cases on record of persons who had lost absolutely their identity for a number of years, there are many who have suddenly regained this knowledge of themselves. One person is mentioned as having been restored after fourteen years of amnesia.

The difficulty of attributing this restoration to the brain is seen, when it is remembered that the whole structure of the brain had been changed in those years, so that the afflicted person had, at the end of this long period, a very different brain from that which he possessed when the amnesia began. Many thoughtful scientific men have come to believe that this personality—this Ego, this soul,—continues to exist after the death of the body.

When we turn to God's written Word we have abundant evidence that the death of the body does not end our conscious existence, and just so surely as we shall live hereafter, so certainly shall we know each other in Our Father's House on High. David believed that he should go to the child he had lost for a little while.

Our Savior comforted his sorrowing disciples as He stood on the very threshold of the eternal world, with the assurance that He was going on before them to prepare many mansions for them. We know each other here. Father and mother and children gather around the hearthstone and bask in the conscious sweetness of love for each other. Surely as our Elder Brother promised that we should not be orphans, we shall know all the sweet influences of mutual recognition and love over in the sweet Beyond.

Abraham and all the old saints were "gathered unto their fathers" when they "fell on sleep." Surely they were not doomed to wander around forever in that other world, knowing none of their friends and loved ones of these earthly scenes!

Not only shall we know our friends in Heaven, but we believe we shall recognize those who have turned away

from God and have missed the joy and sunshine of His smile. Across the impassable gulf, the rich man cries out his agony to Abraham, and Abraham recognizes him as still a "son," but a lost soul. So shall we approve of all God's dealings with men, when we see eye to eye, and face to face, and shall know as we are known. Abraham knew and drew Lazarus close to his heart, because they were children of the same Father in that Father's House. Abraham knew, but could not embrace, the rich man because he had turned his back on his Father and His House.

In that wonderful picture that is drawn for us, in which we see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the assembled sacramental hosts from earth's remotest bounds sitting down in the great Family House in Heaven, we are assured that we behold those who can converse one with another and recount all the marvelous loving kindness that through many dangers, seen and unseen, brought them safely home.

Jesus will be the central object in that happy throng, but so surely as we cannot here love God, whom we have not seen, if we love not our brother whom we have seen, we shall know and love that brother there, so sure as we know and love God.

Our Master made it very plain that some earthly relations such as we know here, shall not exist in Heaven. There shall be no marrying or giving in marriage there, but we shall all be one great, complete, family. Love one to another, and supreme love to God shall cement our family union. Those whom we have most helped spiritually here, we doubt not, shall be dearest to us there.

Do we long to clasp close to our hearts those we so dearly love here? Is our love for them here cemented by supreme love to God, and faithfulness in teaching them to love and serve God? If our loved ones here are our spiritual children, there they will continue to sustain this relation to us. But neglect to train up our children for God and heaven while they are with us here, may forfeit our right to sustain the closest relation to them in the other world. If we can present our children to God, saying unto Him, "Behold, I and the children which Thou hast given me," and can prove our right to them since we have recognized the responsibility of the gift by rearing them for God, we may be sure He will give them back to us,—a richer and better gift than before, as He gave back more to those who had improved the talents given them; but, if we are derelict to our charge, from us shall be taken away our children, as the talent was taken from the unfaithful servant, and given to the faithful servants.

Change is written on all things here below. There are more and more vacant chairs in our earthly homes, as the dear ones hear the loving voice of Our Father calling them to that better home. Soon the old house will know strange voices, the old chairs other occupants,

"Friend after friend departs.
Who has not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts.
That has not here an end."

The falling leaf, the fading flower, the withering grass! Is not this a picture of human life? If it were all of life to live, and all of death to die, well might the whole

world of humanity take up the awful confession of a ruined life that Byron wailed out when he said that his life was in the "sere and yellow leaf," and that for him there was nothing but "the worm, the canker and the grief." Are there any who read these lines, who have no fitted-up mansion, when they must leave their earthly habitations? Jesus has prepared **many** mansions. Is not one of those mansions for **you**? But the mansion is **pre-
pared**. Its every appointment speaks of love to Him, and love to the brothers and sisters gathered in that Home. Are you prepared for that environment?

"THE LORD THINKETH ON ME"

The special providence of God is the consolation of the Christian when sorrows come to him. This doctrine of the loving, watchful, care of our Father in Heaven over us, has been the stronghold into which the child of God has ever fled from the storms about him.

David was oft cast down; he often felt that the very ground beneath him was sinking away from him, that his footsteps had almost slipped, that he was forsaken of God and man. But his courage and his peace of mind and soul came back when he remembered that God's word was pledged that He would not leave, or forsake him. Many times he had cried unto God out of the depths of suffering and anxiety, and even extreme danger, and God had heard his cry and had delivered him.

To us, perturbed and troubled, shaken and beaten almost to death by the storms that howl around us, it is as a beacon light that shines into our darkness when we remember that the God who cares for the birds of the air, who watches over the falling of even a little sparrow, is the same God who numbers our hairs, and allows not one of them to fall without His knowledge and care. Surely each one of God's children may rest confidently and peacefully in the same assurance of the thoughtful care of God over him as that which sustained David in all his trials and tribulations: "The Lord thinketh on me."

He who made the heavens and the earth, who called into being all those suns and systems that are the increas-

ing marvel of the astronomer as well as of every thinking creature in the universe, who stretched out the heavens, and commands all their hosts, who holds the winds in His fist, and the waters of the seas in the hollow of His hand—surely when we are assured that this Omnipotent and Omnipresent God is not only our Maker but our tender, loving, Father who thinks on us, who takes note of every event that shapes and moulds our lives, who knoweth our frame, and remembers that we are dust, surely, surely, we can rest assured that He will never leave nor forsake us, but will make all things work out our everlasting good. When friends forget, and leave us, when all our plans in life seem complete failures, when, in the bitterness of our souls, we wonder why we were ever born, and why we are now doomed to drag out our weary existence through sunless days into nights of deepest gloom, it is a consolation, far beyond any that earth can give, to remember that there is One Who watches over us when we come in and when we go out, Who “thinketh on me”—each one of us. Though poor and forsaken, though our very names may be cast out by men, yet the Lord thinketh on us. He knows us by name. Our whole life with all its failures, as well as all its successes, stands out before His eyes. Men may misunderstand us, and attribute false motives unto us, but God knows us altogether, and as we are His handiwork, He knows just where to strengthen our weakest points, just where to prune away the excrescences of our lives, just where the knife of the surgeon must do its seemingly cruel work, just where to bind up our wounds and pour in the oil and wine. “God thinketh on me!”

His is not a haphazard, purposeless plan for me. He knows just what of discipline I need, and just when it is best that prosperity should come to me.

In the great spiritual temple that God is building to His honor and glory, I have my place:—No one else can be built into my little niche or corner. The great Master Builder will see that I fit into my place, prepared from all eternity for me. He can make no mistake. That I may fit into my appointed place, that the symmetry of the building may not be marred, the cruel chisel may have to cut away many of the ugly and uncouth things that unfit me for that great and beautiful spiritual temple. Surely it is worth all these pains and sad experiences here, if throughout eternity I shall be a lively and beautiful stone in the temple God is building!

That innumerable throng, gathered out of every kindred and tongue and tribe that shall stand, beautified and glorified, in the presence of God, at last, shall no longer doubt the love that brought them to that glad estate, through great tribulation. It is only blood,—the crimson tide that flowed on Calvary that can wash us clean; and so surely as the servant is not above his Master, we, too, must have our blood flow from out broken and contrite hearts; for if we would reign with Him, we must suffer with Him.

“Shall Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No! There’s a cross for every one,
And there’s a cross for me.”

If God thinks on me; if He plans for my highest and best well-being, ought I not to think on Him? In my

own little measure, ought I not to plan to glorify Him in my body and my spirit, which are His?

If we think on God and the things of His Kingdom, can we be indifferent to our fellow-men? Can we love God whom we have not seen, if we love not our brother whom we have seen?

The things on which we think, build up, or tear down, our character.

After various admonitions and exhortations, Paul sums up, not only for the Philippians, but for Christians of all ages, the one rule of healthful development of Christian character: "Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

This is, indeed, an admirable summing up of the things which cannot be the subject of the thoughts of one who lives on the low levels of life.

He who thinks of true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, things, cannot but think of things of good report. His is the heart and mind that taketh up not an evil report against his neighbor. He looks upon his fellow-man as a fellow-creature, made in the image of God, however that image may have been scarred and marred. If there is any virtue, or any praise, he thinks on these things. He is the child of a King, and nothing that makes his Father's Kingdom better is indifferent to him.

While some are bent over their muck rakes, as they grovel in the dust, He looks around him for men whom he may lead to better, and nobler, lives. He thinks on

all the groans and tears of Calvary, and he determines that he will abate no jot of labor and self-sacrifice to enable his Lord to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

God thinketh on me! And, yet, He, none the less, thinketh on my neighbor. Then surely I must not look alone on my own things, but, also, on the things of others. No man liveth unto himself. We touch and are touched by our fellow-men on every hand. Some influence, for good, or evil, goes out from us. Every word we utter, every deed we do, even every thought we think, in some way shapes and moulds our brother. Though the lips move not, though the tongue be silent, the thought in the mind, in some wonderful manner, speaks out through the eye, and declares itself in the whole face. So our fellow-men know whether we love them or are indifferent to them, or hate them, though we only **think** of them.

Let us, then, think pure and worthy thoughts of them, and then we shall be enabled to lead them to God.

Out in the fields of sin are those that we alone can lead back to the Father's House. While we have been thinking of ourselves and our own things, they have been waiting to hear, through us, the Father's invitation to come home. We often think of the material welfare of our dear ones, but how often we forget their eternal interests. Our pleasant homes, the dear ones that make them what they are, all the provision that God has made for our comfort and well-being, are the result of God's thinking on us. Shall we not think of that home prepared for us and these loved ones, and strive to lead them there?

When there was no eye to pity, when there was no arm reached forth to save, Jesus thought on our lost estate, and ran to our relief. Though He was rich, yet, for our sakes, He became poor, though He was exalted and had given unto Him a Name above every name, yet He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, that He might save us. Shall we continue to think only of ourselves and of our material gain, while all around us, our fellow-men are dying because we do not think on them.

All those long days and months, and years, that the poor prodigal was away from home, the Father's heart went out in longing for his return. In His earnest longing for the wayward boy, in His intense thought of him, His eyes were given new and stronger power of vision—the vision of love,—and He saw him afar off, as poor, and ragged and miserable he staggered back home; and He ran to meet him with a love that hushed all his confessions with the ring, and the robe and the shoes, and the royal welcome and feast.

God grant that none of us may be as the elder brother—unwilling to welcome home the penitent one! Can we love the Father, however we may give him a perfunctory service, if we care not for our brother out in the haunts of sin, and think not of him as our brother and our Father's son, whom we are ever ready to welcome home?

O, wonderful thought! However despised, and lowly, and unknown we are, God thinketh on us! Shall we not think on Him and all that pertains to His Kingdom?

HOLDING TRUTH IN SINCERITY

Some of the darkest pages of human history were written by those who were sincere in what they did. It avails naught to be merely sincere, if we hold not the truth in sincerity. Many men have held fast to the grossest error in absolute sincerity. The most awful crimes have been committed in the name of religion by those who were convinced that they were right in what they did.

Paul verily thought that he was doing God service when he stood over Stephen and held the clothes of those that stoned him to death, and when he went everywhere hailing men and women and committing them to prison, he thought God approved his course. It is certainly not enough to be sincere. The heathen mother, in all sincerity, casts her helpless child into the Ganges, and sincerely believes she has the approval of her gods in thus tearing out her very heart in the supreme sacrifice that she makes.

How often men tell us it makes no difference what one believes, so that he is sincere in his belief. It makes all the difference between darkness and light, between hell and heaven. We must know the truth, and, then, we must hold it in sincerity. We may be sincere and conscientious, and yet, on account of ignorance, we may make the most lamentable mistakes, and may commit even the most heinous sins.

It is not enough merely to know the truth. Some hold it is *unrighteousness*, and live wicked lives, even though

they know the will of God. Some men who have had the best of religious instruction, and who give their mental assent to the truth, divorce it, absolutely, from their daily lives. It is vain that the Master has taught in their streets, that the Gospel has been proclaimed in their ears from their earliest recollection. They have not yielded themselves to God.

The truth in itself cannot save. Men have heard the proclamation of the truth, have even been counted with Christ's followers, and have, then, Judas-like, betrayed Him. Exalted privileges do not, in themselves, save. Capernaum, though exalted to Heaven, abusing her great privileges, was brought down to hell.

If merely knowing the truth could save, multitudes who close their hearts to Jesus, and fill them with all that is worldly and sinful, who live low, vile, and sensual lives in this world, would be regenerated and saved, even while Christ is barred out of their hearts.

But Jesus wants the heart. "My son, give me thine heart," is His loving entreaty.

God requires us to hold the truth, and to hold it in sincerity. He alone worships God who worships Him in sincerity and truth.

The true Christian life must be symmetrical—it must be well balanced. There is no room in it for idle dreaming, for misguided enthusiasm, for wild fancies and vain imaginings.

He who holds the truth must not, also, try to hold that which is antagonistic to it. If he believes God's revealed Word, he must fashion his life according to its teachings.

In vain, at last, shall be his cry, "Lord, Lord," if he has not done the things that were commanded him. Living as Jesus' disciple, he must have the spirit of his Master, and humbly, believingly, and obediently, do His will. He must lead a life of faith and prayer, and his heart must be ever open to Christ, and his face irradiated with the outshining of the inward spirit. He must hold and speak the truth in love; he must worship in spirit and in truth.

Some people think that mere amiability fits one for heaven. But many people who are even lovely in their relations with their fellowmen, are the enemies of Christ. Their attitude toward Him is one of indifference, or even hostility.

The world is full of false doctrine. Seductive voices are around us everywhere, and would, with enticing words, lure us to our destruction. Men are not careful to try the spirits whether they be of God. If they honor not the Master, if they bow not down to Him, we should not hear them. Our Master opened up the scriptures, and attested their truth as to the great fact of the Fall, and yet there are those who would, in denying man's fall, deny the necessity of a Savior. There are those who in denying the awful doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked, eliminate from Jesus' teaching the awful truth that some shall go away into *everlasting* punishment. The same Greek word qualifies the word "punishment" that qualifies the word "life," in the passage in Matt. 25; 46. "And these shall go away into *everlasting* punishment; but the righteous into life *eternal*."

It is vain to speak peace to the sinful soul, when there is no peace, except as it is purchased on Calvary! What

avails it for us to believe a lie, and thus be damned? "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Jesus is the Truth. All that speaks not in accordance with His teachings, all that catches not His spirit, is error. His call is, "Come unto Me, and *learn of Me*." Other teachers can be heard only as they speak the words of the great Master. All the great doctrines of God's word,—the Creation, the Fall, Redemption, Justification, Sanctification, Glorification, the coming again of Jesus, and His final triumph over Satan, were all authenticated by our Great Master and Teacher.

Across the *impassable* and *fixed* gulf, He tells us, through Abraham, that there can be no passage. Vain the wails of the rich man for a second chance, when he had thrown away his *first*, and *only*, chance, of salvation. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be."

There was never a time when we should stand up more valiantly, for the Truth of God, than in this day of false doctrine. We must not ask, "What is Truth," and, like Pilate, wait not for the Master's answer. We must "stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein;" and if we do, we are assured that thus we shall find rest for our souls. It is only when we say, as the rebellious people of old said, "We will not walk therein," that we have doubts and fears, and are "carried about with every wind of doctrine."

If we give God our hearts and live lives of faith in the Son of God; if we wholly rely upon Jesus for salvation, we are safe:

“The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes.
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never, forsake.”

We must hold the truth in our intellects. But this is not enough. Even the devils believe and tremble.

The truth must be in our hearts: “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

That is no true worship of God that is not in spirit and in Truth.

THE STRANGER WITHIN THE GATES

Care for the stranger was enjoined under the Old Economy; and our Lord, in enumerating the ministries of the righteous unto Him when they served His people, says that when He was a stranger they took Him in.

Do we ever think of the obligation that is upon us to entertain strangers. In encouraging and cheering them, we are serving our Master. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me."

How many strangers are within our gates! What vast multitudes are coming to our shores every year! What a responsibility is upon us to see that they are cared for, and that they are made better physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, than when they cast in their lot with us.

The stranger within our gates, is *our* stranger. We are responsible for him, and we shirk that responsibility at our peril! If he is to remain distinct and separate from us; if he is to be taught no love for us, or our institutions, we need not be surprised when we awake, some day, to the fact that he has become a real menace to us and to all our country stands for. *We must take him in*, or, turning our backs upon the Master's teaching, we must reap the dire results of our folly.

All around us, native born, and foreign born, are the strangers within our gates, who, having no good influences around them, because the professed followers of Jesus ostracise them from their homes and hearts, are drawn into the net of the Evil One, and are destroyed.

for time and eternity by his emissaries. Countless young men are drawn into brightly lighted saloons and other places of death by the promise of entertainment there, who could have been wooed to upright and useful Christian lives, if God's people had been not forgetful to entertain strangers.

One Christian man saw his duty to the stranger, and was rejoiced at winning two young boys to a better and happier life. If there were more John Becks in the Church of Christ, she would soon solve the problem of the stranger within the gates, and build up a noble citizenship that would make glad church and state.

John Beck, thoroughly weary from the work of the day, closed his big ledger and locked it safely in the office desk, as the town clock struck seven, one winter evening. Putting on overcoat and hat, and longing for the comfort and cheer of home, he quickly left his office, and locking the street door behind him, he hastened home.

Standing in front of a brilliantly lighted saloon, his quick eye noted two young men, who seemed on the point of going in to the light and the music. He passed them, and his quick strides had carried him well down the street, when he remembered that he was a Christian, and must act as his Master would act. Retracing his steps, and going up close to the young fellows, and laying a friendly hand upon the shoulder of each, he said, "Boys don't go into that saloon. Have you nowhere to spend your evenings but in a place like that?"

Responding to such evident interest in them, the young men told him that their choice lay between the warmed and lighted saloon, and their bare and cold lodgings, or

the streets. "We fellows are strangers in this town, and we get so dead lonesome, and this is all of social life that's open to us here."

Beck looked square into their eyes for a moment, and then made up his mind. He felt sure his mother and sisters, who were devout Christians, would not consider the introduction of these boys into their home for one evening, an intrusion.

"Boys," he said, "come home with me. I know you will be welcome to my home, and I want to get acquainted with you."

Such hearty good-will could not be resisted. They were soon ushered into the bright and cozy parlor, and the hearty welcome soon put them at their ease. The evening passed all too quickly for these young fellows. The air of Christian refinement that was about them for the few short hours, wrought its charm upon them. The rude charm of the gilded saloon no longer threw its spell over them. Their hungry hearts were being filled with better, and higher, and lovelier things. How many young fellows could have been saved from wreck and ruin, and, at last, a drunkard's grave, if there had been some earnest Christian man to open wide his heart and home to them! This world is so very full of sorrows and woes that the diffusion abroad in it of the Christ spirit, could wipe away, and bring joy, and happiness, and peace, instead, if the followers of the blessed Jesus would only remember the stranger within the gates, and be not forgetful to entertain him!

Just as the young fellows were going, they said:

"You don't know what you have done for us. We get so lonely evenings we don't half know what to do with ourselves. A social time like this is everything to us. We shall never forget it, nor you."

"And," said one of the girls, handing each of them a dainty bit of pasteboard, "these are our church invitation cards. We shall be very glad to see you at all our Sabbath services."

A day or so after this, John Beck was busy at his desk when he was cheered by a note a lad handed him. He tore open the envelope, and found a printed temperance pledge, to which the names of Hall and Ford were affixed in full. On a slip of paper was written:—

"You ventured to introduce a couple of hard boys into your home in order to rescue them from the saloon for one night. It did more—it rescued us for life! We can make no more acceptable return than to present you with the inclosed pledge, with our signatures attached.—Ford and Hall."

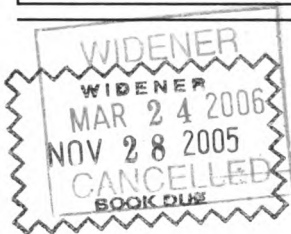
Hard, indeed, is that heart that will not respond to such Christian love as that which went out from these Christian people for these poor friendless boys. Would not such a spirit as this, stirring in the hearts of God's people, solve the problem of the church, and give a new and powerful force to her ministry, that would no longer fail to reach the great mass of the unchurched? Would not men be drawn to Christ, if His followers would only show the world how beautiful a thing is the *real, practical*, religion of Jesus?

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